

TWAVEZA EAST AFRICA STRATEGY 2024-27

Citizen-powered government



Twaweza East Africa Strategy 2024-27

1. From the Executive Director

We are pleased to present Twaweza East Africa's Strategy for 2024 to 2027.

The world is in a period of intensifying uncertainty characterised by deepening crises as well as new opportunities. It is no exaggeration to suggest that we are living through a moment of significant structural transformation in ways that are sometimes visible (the geopolitical convulsions, extreme weather events) and sometimes imperceptible (erosion of the social contract and expanding loss of trust in government). Twaweza is eager and ready to navigate this turbulent moment while contributing to shaping its evolution in the direction of progressive and positive outcomes.

Our core vision remains unchanged: **an open society built on the human impulse to make a difference, where information and ideas flow, all citizens engage, and authorities are accountable to the people.** In such a society, citizen agency is enriched, government responsiveness is enhanced, and the relationship between citizens and their government is improved.

To achieve it we must raise our ambition while sharpening our focus. That is why our overarching objective in this strategy is to **change how national and local government behaves in order to improve the lives of ordinary citizens, especially those of women and youth.** We want to change the system to achieve impact at scale.

This new strategy is both evolutionary and revolutionary. It reflects the cumulative experience of 15 years since our establishment in 2009, and the enduring relevance of our core vision. At the same time, it acknowledges and embraces the central role of government in creating a society of engaged, active citizens and accountable authorities. It makes Twaweza even better suited for the challenging governance landscape that we propose to navigate and shape. That is why we shall focus on influencing, with evidence and empathy, how government - especially those institutions that support local governments to serve citizens - works.

This strategy focuses on two connected outcomes. The ultimate, people level outcome, is one in which more citizens, especially women, youth and people living with disabilities, are leading more dignified lives with improved services and a felt sense of enhanced agency and self-efficacy. To achieve this will require local government practices that are open, inclusive, responsive and accountable, and supportive national institutional frameworks. These are the institutional level outcomes that we shall pursue through focused, evidence-driven and empathetic engagement with the local government systems.

The strategy will be implemented through the following three connected missions:

- **Mission 1: Demonstrating citizen agency and government responsiveness to build trust**
- **Mission 2: Generating evidence for better decisions and actions by citizens and government**
- **Mission 3: Strengthening civil society sector to enhance its legitimacy and impact**

We are convinced that we are taking the right pathway forward. In a forthcoming reflection on governance in Africa in the 21st century, the World Bank defines "civil capacity" as the bargaining power of the average citizen – citizens' capacity to be politically engaged, to cooperate and to organise to resolve the collective action problem and hold the state to account. The Bank finds a

positive correlation between civil capacity and the quality of public services. They are not alone. Evidence and anecdote from around the world, including the work of the Open Government Partnership, demonstrates amply that citizens' civic muscles and their capacity to negotiate their needs with government are critical elements of good governance and social development. In this strategy, we plan to help citizens build those muscles.

We are confident that Twaweza's unique independent evidence generation, superior analytical and compelling communications skills, strong convening power, deep local roots and global connections is strongly positioned to help shape the transformation needed to fulfil a vision of government that is authentically and productively powered by people.

2. Defining key terms in this Strategy

During 2023, Twaweza did some deep reflection and exploration as we developed this new strategy. In an April retreat of our Members and the Board of Directors, we were challenged to move beyond the creation of 'islands of happiness'. We began to explore the concept of systems change, culminating in a mid-year extended management team retreat in which we explored a Twaweza focused on promoting improved livelihoods for people through transforming the responsible government and market systems. While a lot felt unfamiliar, and much of our core value proposition felt lost in this approach, we pushed ourselves to look beyond our comfort zone and to maintain the powerful twin focus of systems change on people and institutions.

What has emerged is an experimental approach that combines the powerful hypotheses behind systems change with strong implementation to ensure our engagement continues to be grounded in people's lived realities and current evidence. We also maintain our focus on the importance of diverse actors in civil society acting in concert to promote democratic values.

Given the path-breaking nature of the strategy and the multiple uses of various terms, we define our key terms below:

- **Systems Change:** sustained transformation of public institutions to serve people, especially historically marginalised groups, more effectively and inclusively.
- **Empathetic Engagement:** building trusting relationships, especially with those inside government. Being responsive to opportunities in their system, mindful of their real constraints, speaking to their incentives, and walking the full journey with them are the main ingredients.
- **Impact at Scale:** in its most essential form we are looking for evidence of impact beyond our spaces of direct implementation, the markers that the ideas and ways of working are resonating differently. In its truest form, we are seeking population-level impacts from our work – that significant percentages of people in East Africa, especially women and youth, experience positive change in how their governments deliver.
- **Local Government:** in referring to the system of local government we are describing the national and local institutions, norms and dynamics that determine citizens' experience of government.
- **Citizen Agency:** actions by individual or groups of citizens to advance community agendas or answer community needs; often this entails seeking information, engaging in planning, monitoring services, contributing money, labour or materials to development projects, expressing voice or demands to government. Contributing factors to citizen agency include

efficacy, expectations, narratives, knowledge (how things work, how to make change), and for women and youth especially, social norms and traditions.

- **Self-efficacy:** This is a psychological concept around people's own feelings of power and influence over the outcomes in their own lives. It is an important determinant of agency (action) or the internal attitude and feeling that influences agency.
- **Respect:** Research finds respect to be an integral part of people's feelings of dignity. Busara Centre for Behavioural Economics found that Kenyans both value and feel the lack of respect from government officials and interactions¹. Twaweza's own work has found that the tone and character of their interactions with government officials influence citizens' willingness to engage – through both expressing their needs and contributing to development projects. Positively characterised interactions with government at the local level underpin direct service improvements across sectors.

3. What makes Twaweza unique

During the past 15 years, Twaweza has developed four strong and distinct assets which make us well-suited to execute the ambitious set of initiatives outlined in this strategy.

1. We have exceptional, versatile independent data and evidence collection approaches. We have a reputation for rigorous and creative evidence. We pioneered Sauti za Wananchi, Africa's first nationally representative mobile phone survey in Tanzania and we have successfully rolled it out to Kenya and Uganda. Sauti za Wananchi has provided critical, new insights for governments and citizens on a wide range of issues and themes. It has helped capture and amplify public opinion (political polls), inform national discourse (food security, quality of service delivery, Covid-19) and shape public policy (mobile money levy removal). Over time Sauti za Wananchi has evolved to capture sub-national voices (at county, district or municipality level) and the views and experiences of different groups. During the Covid-19 pandemic, we were able to repurpose our methodology to continue to collect vital data to support government messaging and containment approaches. We have also pioneered a range of innovative and rigorous research methodologies to gain insight on topics as diverse as electoral preferences and access to information. We manage East Africa's largest randomised control trial in education in close collaboration with relevant government ministries in Tanzania that has had one of the strongest learning effects of any education intervention in the world tested through this methodology. And we are also extensively experienced in qualitative methodologies. Our research and data collection platforms have been tested for the robustness of their methodologies, and have been used extensively by third parties, including government, to inform their research, decisions and strategic work.

2. We bring superior analytical skills and compelling communications. We are good at analysing the data that we collect, connecting it to other sources and uncovering fresh new insights from the analysis. We also produce strong reviews of laws and regulations affecting transparency, accountability and participation and are able to communicate clearly in writing, graphically and in person, the essential issues and their wider implications both to policy actors and to a broad public. Media houses often seek our data, analysis and comment to enhance their coverage of issues ranging from government budget proposals, the quality of public service delivery to broader governance developments in security, constitutional issues and citizen assessment of government performance in general. When working in coalition with other organisations such as the Tax Justice

¹ <https://dignityproject.net/experiences-of-disrespect/>

Alliance in Uganda, the Coalition on the Right to Information (CORI) in Tanzania, and the Open Government Partnership community in Kenya, we are often nominated by peers to lead the analysis of the issues, to support research and to craft the communications and public or policy engagement strategies to promote common positions.

3. We have strong convening power. We have a reputation for being non-partisan, honest brokers. We are able to be a bridge between citizens and authorities, or different interest groups on an issue. The combination of our deep research experience, strong analytical and engagement expertise and demonstrable neutrality in [party] political matters, offer a level of trust and comfort to those whom we invite to engage with our work and with each other. Our initiatives have connected senior government officials (Ministers and permanent/principal secretaries, senior police and army officers, government spokespersons) with ordinary citizens in person at the local government level, and through media at the national level. We demonstrate how informed dialogue, even on contentious issues, can be done in an atmosphere of mutual respect and collaboration.

4. We are a global organisation grounded in East Africa. In all the spaces and platforms in which we engage, we bring uniquely diverse perspectives. We are deeply grounded in the communities in which we work, harvesting granular insights about how life and government are navigated in the daily lives of East Africans. Through our network of Sauti za Wananchi respondents, we are able to feel the pulse of ordinary citizens and get a strong sense of their lived experiences. Our convening power at national level, where we are well connected and respected, allows us to feed these insights into public and policy debates. At the same time we have strong global networks; our research and intervention approaches are at the cutting edge of thinking in the transparency, accountability and participation community and our research network spans some of the world's best universities (MIT, Georgetown, Berkley, Amsterdam, Copenhagen and London School of Economics) and international research institutions (Global Integrity, CoPSAM, TAP, Accountability Research Center). Our extensive regional and global research network both enhances our research skills, as well as provides a global platform on which to share our practical lessons. We occupy key leadership positions in global initiatives including the Open Government Partnership (Twaweza has been the only organisation in the OGP's history to produce two Civil Society Co-Chairs of the Steering Committee), the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data, and the Open Contracting Partnership where we help to shape the global agenda and conversation.

4. Our Changing World

An increasingly turbulent world

Our world is increasingly complex and ambiguous. Economics, politics, society and the environment are all in a state of considerable uncertainty and unpredictability. Turbulence is now the norm.

To thrive amid such volatility, and in particular to achieve the kinds of changes that we want to see in the world will require both careful outward-looking attention to important trends and inwardly a high level of adaptability and flexibility to respond to developments as they happen. Five key global and regional trends that are likely to shape the world for the rest of the decade and beyond:

1. The global economy is fragile, shaken both by Covid-19 and war in Ukraine and the Middle East.
2. Both globally and in the region, the benefits of growth are accruing mainly to those with existing wealth and power, increasing inequality and deepening social fracture.
3. The climate crisis has shifted from a future threat to a present reality.
4. Democracy is under attack, with autocratic leaders and governments growing more confident.

5. Within East Africa in particular, rapid demographic change presents both challenges and opportunities that our countries are ill-prepared to meet.

The aftershocks of the Covid-19 pandemic continue to unsettle the global economy. These are compounded by the conflicts in Eastern Europe and the Middle East which have affected food supplies and fuel prices and public spending. In 2022, global inflation rates reached heights that had not been seen for decades². While that peak may have passed, “the world economy is still in danger,” declares *The Economist*³. This resonates with East African citizens. In the most recent *Sauti za Wananchi* surveys, citizens in all three countries placed the cost of living at the top of their list of concerns, with unemployment and food insecurity close behind.

Moreover, the economic growth that has been seen in recent years has accrued mostly to those who were already wealthy and powerful. The World Inequality Report 2022⁴ found that the top 1% had taken 38% of additional wealth accumulated since the mid-1990s, whereas the bottom 50% captured just 2%, and that global inequalities were “about as great today as they were at the peak of Western imperialism in the early 20th century.” There are signs that the pandemic accelerated this trend. East Africa has similar experiences⁵.

The climate crisis seems to be upon us. The evidence of rising temperatures, which had been building for years, is now translating in very real ways into melting glaciers, unprecedented heatwaves, and increasingly extreme storms⁶. In Uganda, citizens report that over the past decade, temperatures have increased, rainfall has declined, and that the rain season both starts later and is shorter in length. Droughts, heatwaves, storms and floods have already become more common and much more intense, with severe impacts on both people and the environment. While we know with greater confidence that agricultural productivity will continue to be affected, it is harder to know how deep those effects will be, and how well and how quickly, if at all, farmers will be able to adapt their practices in response. As we write this strategy, the international community gathered at the 28th Conference of the Parties (COP 28) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in the United Arab Emirates has agreed on a new losses and damages fund. But, will this be operationalised fairly? Will the financing pledges will be honoured? Will those affected the most be able to access these funds? It all remains to be seen.

In 2023, Freedom House concluded that across the world, democracy had declined once again, the 17th consecutive year for which they reached this conclusion⁷. Economic challenges, technological developments – such as the rise of social media and its associated echo-chambers – and the increasing prominence of non-democratic powers such as China in international affairs, have all provided a fertile ground for populism and fed the rise of the autocrats. Among many citizens there is an understandable sense that a leader who gets things done is better than one who follows the rules; they have been frustrated and disillusioned, disrespected and ignored and these autocrats appeal to these sentiments and offer seemingly simple and effective solutions. The examples come from all regions of the world: Narendra Modi, Donald Trump, Viktor Orbán, Jair Bolsonaro and more. The list is a long one, and includes countries that previously had long records of respect for inclusive democratic norms, and indeed includes some here in East Africa. The rise of these populist

² <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/Issues/2023/10/10/world-economic-outlook-october-2023>

³ <https://www.economist.com/leaders/2023/07/19/the-world-economy-is-still-in-danger>

⁴ <https://wir2022.wid.world/>

⁵ <https://www.businessdailyafrica.com/bd/economy/kenya-s-rich-get-richer-as-gap-with-the-poor-widens--4263420>

⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/aug/28/crazy-off-the-charts-records-has-humanity-finally-broken-the-climate>

⁷ <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2023/marking-50-years>

authoritarians is marked by a shift from rational, scientific argument to emotional and narrative appeal.

At the same time, increased fragmentation of the media - with the rise of social media in particular - has led to a situation where people mainly interact with and get their news from people like themselves. Each group has its own conversations, and even its own “facts”. This echo-chamber effect means people can have a distorted impression of what the world looks like, and what it thinks, giving them both greater confidence in their own beliefs and greater disconnect with alternative views and the decisions of politicians. Further, with the introduction and rapid growth of public-use Artificial Intelligence, particularly generative AI, and the migration of the shared “public square” to the digital world, the interaction between technological development and democracy will only intensify.

Demographic trends are a major driver in East Africa. All three of the countries in which we work are characterised by high population growth and a large youth bulge. The UN estimates that the total population of the three countries will reach 250 million by 2040 (up from 171 million in 2023). In 2023, half of Uganda’s population is aged 16 or under⁸ and 77% of Tanzania’s population is under 35 years of age (NBS Census data 2022). On the one hand, this means dependency ratios are set to drop sharply over the next ten years, meaning there will be more people of working age able to support others, potentially enabling the region to reap a demographic dividend in productivity. At the same time, however, this rapid growth will create new challenges of scale and expectations that governments are already struggling to meet.

Compounding the situation is the fact that each of these crises and challenges undermines the ability of governments to respond effectively to the others, and reduces public confidence that the government has the will and ability to steer a path through the storm. And across all of this, those who are hit hardest are, as so often, those who had the least to begin with – least resources, least power, least resilience.

A fragile relationship between citizens and government

In East Africa this complexity and these challenges come on top of a context where, for decades, the relationship between citizens and their governments has not been constructive. Governments have expected obedience from citizens, rather than being guided by the need to recognise and respond to citizens’ interests and priorities. Those in positions of authority have too often used those positions to achieve personal gain, rather than to benefit society. As a result, citizens have learned not to expect much from their governments; instead they have normalised the status quo that their voices will not be heard, their problems will not be addressed, and that if they speak publicly to criticise any of this, they will be punished for doing so. Citizens are disappointed and their trust in their governments is evaporating.

In Tanzania, citizens’ approval ratings for elected leaders – from village / street chairpersons all the way up to the President, have fallen steadily over the past ten years. In Kenya and Uganda, a clear majority of citizens say the national government takes no account of citizens’ opinions when making decisions. In Uganda, citizens expect that only a third of a hypothetical cash transfer scheme would actually reach the intended beneficiaries. And while, in all three countries, citizens’ consistently express clear support in surveys for democratic principles such as freedom of expression and association, they are equally clear in their scepticism as to whether they are able to exercise these rights in practice. Perhaps unsurprisingly, citizens are increasingly opting out: attendance and

⁸ <https://population.un.org/wpp/>

participation at community meetings has declined sharply in Uganda, for example, while Kenya's elections in 2022 had the lowest turnout – 65% of registered voters – for twenty years.

And yet, despite the challenges, there are also grounds for hope – not least in the increasing recognition of the difficulties we face, and in the growing grassroots movements standing up for democracy, for climate action and for social justice. While this is most obviously the case in the global north, it also applies to East Africa, though in different ways. The new and large generation of young people is an opportunity as well as a challenge, as they have the potential to transform the region both politically and economically. They are in touch with global trends as never before and stand ready to challenge entrenched narratives and established norms of what governments should be, how citizens should act, and how the two should relate to each other.

But why is this not happening more often? For several reasons. First, it is because citizens' low expectations of what they could hope to achieve by taking action – their self-efficacy and what they risk by doing so, act as a handbrake on getting started. This is made worse by the civic space limitations and narratives of citizen-state relations, as described above, that create an inertia against civic action by citizens. Second, it is because they are unsure of how to go about it – there is a lack of examples of citizens showing what is possible and of people with practical experience of inspiring, mobilising and coordinating collective action. Third, citizens need confidence in their understanding of the situation: clear identification and ownership of a problem, confidence in the presence of allies, and sufficient knowledge of how the system works to enable them to target their efforts. And fourth, particularly for women, younger people and other disadvantaged groups, these challenges are even greater. In many areas, social expectations are that these groups will defer to others – the older men, for example, who are often those in decision-making positions – rather than take steps to advance their interests.

While it can be tempting (and sometimes effective on a small scale) to work with citizens and mobilise them to take actions that directly improve their lives, this cannot be the whole story. To achieve change on a scale beyond the level of a single community, to shape narratives that respect and encourage active citizens and responsive authorities in the longer term and across the country, and to protect the space that creates and celebrates – vibrant public debate and values citizens' voices, working with government authorities is essential.

Local Civic Space: where it matters for people

Civic space – the environment in which citizens and citizens' groups are able to associate, speak and act – has been under threat in East Africa in recent years, as part of the democratic backsliding that has been seen more widely.

In Tanzania, a range of laws and regulations have been introduced that limit the freedoms of citizens, the media and civil society to speak, and which have been selectively enforced against dissenters and critics of the government. There have been some signs since 2021 that these restrictions are being relaxed, with senior leaders promising more freedom for the media and delivering some reconciliation with opposition political parties, for example. However, the signals have been mixed, and prominent critics of government actions continue to face repercussions for speaking out. The push-pull tension between democratic and autocratic instincts both within government and in wider public debate will continue and may intensify in the run up to elections in 2024 and 2025.

In Uganda, civic space continues to be restricted in both law and practice. Even where laws exist that aim to protect freedoms – such as the Access to Information Act – practice can be very different

from what's written. Critical voices in civil society have been silenced, and trust has eroded among civil society actors. Laws are policed with a high degree of political imperative, through seemingly random arrests, media closures and internet shutdowns, and the judiciary often delays to respond and deliver justice. The primary vehicle in the country for governance funding was suspended and civil society actors vocal in the human rights space have had their operations paused.

In Kenya – the most open of the three countries – citizens have more freedom to voice their opinions and criticisms than in either Tanzania or Uganda. The country's prominent role in the Open Government Partnership (OGP) provides opportunities to protect and expand this space further. However, while national conversations can be noisy and vibrant and passionate, the practice of citizens' making their voices heard on issues that affect their daily lives remains problematic, as in Tanzania and Uganda. Public participation, for example, is a major focus of the new constitution and devolved government system. But in most cases this tends to be characterised by tokenistic participation, where citizens are given neither the time, information or opportunity to meaningfully influence key decisions. Moreover, in all three countries, even where processes do allow for meaningful input, the question of whose voices are heard remains significant: in many cases, older men dominate public conversations, while young people, women and other disadvantaged groups are side-lined.

Indeed, across all three countries this local-level aspect of civic space – as lived and experienced by citizens, rather than by media houses, politicians and NGOs operating nationally – is a key element of civic space that is often overlooked. Civil society, for example, focuses largely on pressing for changes to national laws and policies that are, at best, remote from the lived realities and wants of the majority of citizens, who understandably question whether there are any direct benefits to their lives from open civic space. In the past two-three years, citizens have consistently and increasingly highlighted issues of economics and livelihoods as their primary concerns. Changing the law on national statistics, for example, is a very long route to putting food on the table of the poor, and people understandably have questions about both the priorities and public legitimacy of organisations that decide to take this long route.

But, civic space is powerfully salient at the local level where it is lived: who attends community meetings, for example, and who speaks – and so whose priorities and needs are addressed? Do such meetings genuinely feed into decisions and practices by local government authorities? And what happens when someone publicly voices criticism of local leaders or local government actions? Such matters are shaped by a range of factors, including national and local laws, the political context, economics and livelihoods, and social and cultural norms.

Twaweza has also seen success in governance interventions that operate in smaller ecosystems: the spaces and places where citizens live their lives and where they can see direct connections between the challenges they face and individuals with power over them. The communities in these spaces are connected beyond geographical location, they tend to navigate similar constraints and align around core priorities. This means that trust and connection are more deeply embedded in these groups, that the relevance of addressing governance issues is more immediately connected to their lived challenges and that they are able to see direct impact from any changes.

Improvements to civic space specifically and governance more broadly are more meaningfully addressed granularly, in geographical or identity communities, often in more localised spaces. At this level, the connections between the daily bread and butter challenges faced by young and old, men and women and governance and process issues can be more easily and immediately made. The framing of rights issues can be less contentious as they become intimately connected with the imperative for governments to deliver services.

In this, public narratives – the stories we tell each other about the proper roles of citizens and authorities, and indeed the roles of different citizens – are key. In abstract terms, most would probably agree with statements like “everyone has the right to express their view” and “government authorities should be responsive to citizens’ preferences.” But when it comes to real world examples, such as ensuring that younger women have opportunities to speak, civil servants listening to citizens, or allowing vocal critics to speak freely, it is often the underlying norms and narratives that shape how things actually play out.

Reimagining civil society

In an era of heightened political polarisation and growing scepticism towards traditional institutions of governance, the role of civil society has never been more crucial, while being increasingly under threat. As democratic principles are attacked and the voices of authoritarian leaders rise, the importance of a vibrant and independent civil society becomes increasingly evident.

The legitimate role of civil society is increasingly in question as populist authoritarians gain power around the world. Critics can point to a long track record of failed projects and wasted resources, and they can question the right of what they describe as unrepresentative and disconnected organisations to play an active role in governance. The Edelman Trust Barometer found a drop in trust for NGOs globally between 2020 and 2021⁹.

Globally, sources of financing are shrinking and bilateral donors are increasingly retreating into largely ineffective models of project funding. Twaweza is increasingly a unique organisation with a strategic and uncompromising approach to our resourcing structure which has enabled us to achieve significant success. We were the only organisation profiled in a global study about resilience and funding covering over 80 civil society organisations¹⁰. As resources become scarcer across the globe, these two trends will increasingly interact with challenges to legitimacy being used to justify decreases in funding.

In Tanzania and Uganda, where norms of deference to authority are deeply ingrained, civil society organisations face unique challenges in establishing their legitimacy and demonstrating their impact. Often perceived as detached from the everyday realities of ordinary citizens, civil society actors are frequently subjected to accusations of elitism and irrelevance.

The wider sector is equally beset with challenges. Opposition political parties are stifled and unable to grow their support base as they focus on defending themselves from government attacks. Media instincts for self-censorship in Tanzania are strong. While media content is more critical in Uganda, coverage is skewed by financial incentives and political imperatives. Religious entities insulate themselves from harsh political realities and their role in perpetuating submissiveness and acquiescence.

NGOs can appear particularly disconnected, quick to settle into business as usual, into endless cycles of policy and legislative change which rarely touch people’s lives directly. Twaweza research found that, in 2021 11% of Tanzanians have ever interacted with an NGO in their community. While half (49%) think that NGOs contribute to development to a large or average extent, 1 out of 5 (22%) think

⁹ <https://www.edelman.com/sites/g/files/aatuss191/files/2021-03/2021%20Edelman%20Trust%20Barometer.pdf>

¹⁰ Breaking the Starvation Cycle, Humentum, <https://humentum.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Humentum-ACR-Research-Report-FINAL.pdf>, March 2022

they do so to a small extent¹¹.

Furthermore, NGOs have failed to establish a space for themselves as defenders of rights and advocates for people: 6% of Tanzanians think NGOs are supposed to work on human rights or governance or citizen participation while 23% think they should work on social services and 15% say helping the poor¹². These perceptions seem to obtain in Kenya and Uganda also, undoubtedly compounded by the origin of NGOs as a service delivery support function.

These views are further exacerbated by a history of internal weaknesses within the sector itself in all three countries. Instances of corruption, mismanagement, and a tendency to prioritise external funding over community engagement have eroded public trust and raised questions about the sector's true motives. Moreover, an overemphasis on formal legal frameworks have hampered the ability of civil society to effect meaningful change.

The challenges faced by civil society in Tanzania and Uganda in particular are compounded by an increasingly restrictive regulatory environment. Government rhetoric often paints civil society actors as adversaries rather than partners, creating an atmosphere of fear and mistrust. This hostile environment has stifled the voices of dissent and hindered the sector's ability to hold the government accountable.

Although there have been rhetorical shifts and important signals of support for the work of NGOs under the sixth phase administration in Tanzania, these have not been accompanied by accompanying institutional changes in the laws and regulations or even the obstructiveness of the bureaucracy.

In Uganda, contrastingly, the environment is becoming increasingly restrictive with the suspension of the Democratic Governance Facility and the prohibition on the operations of over 50 human rights and governance organisations. 'Lawfare' has become more sophisticated as restrictions on NGO operations come in a myriad of laws; compliance is an increasingly complex business.

Although civil society organisations in Kenya face similar challenges in terms of legitimacy, accountability and impact, the operating context is, at least in late 2023, is significantly more open than in Tanzania and Uganda. However there are some early indications that the new administration may have more limited tolerance for activism and critique.

5. What we have learnt from executing the 2019-2023 Strategy

What we got right

We amplified unheard voices

Through Sauti za Wananchi, in contrast to many public barometers, we hear disproportionately from the often silent rural majority. Through boosted samples we can amplify voices from historically underserved areas. By working with a nationally representative sample we ensure that the broad spectrum of voices, not just the loudest, can be heard. We have also particularly worked to begin to address the exclusion and marginalisation of young women in the communities in which we work. All our research and experience tell us that young women in East Africa face twofold discrimination based on gender and age. As a result their problems are often unknown and always unaddressed. By

¹¹ Ipsos Tanzania, Omnibus 2021

¹² Ipsos Tanzania, Omnibus 2021

focusing on the inclusion and agency of young women in community-based research, as change agents, and in committees, we were able to support them to begin to address these issues. Attendance and speaking at community meetings has become more of a norm for women and girls. However, the challenges remain significant. Young women continue to be particularly marginalised in formal leadership, in the family and in communities. In some cases we have been forced to compromise our principles: in communities in which women feel it is impossible to speak in front of men, groups of women approach one or both of the local change agents prior to meetings to discuss what they wish to see raised in the meeting. The change agents can then open these issues for discussion during these meetings. Although this does enable a broader spectrum of issues to be addressed, including those that largely or only affect women and girls, the approach maintains and potentially even legitimises patriarchal norms.

We powerfully demonstrated the possibilities of inclusive collective action

As a result of our participatory action research (animation) intervention, thousands of citizens across Tanzania and Uganda have had their pressing service challenges solved. They are expressing themselves more in decision-making spaces and living the benefits of a more democratic approach to local government. Even in areas where, for various reasons, we had to withdraw or slow implementation, we have seen the spirit live on and the work continues. Communities are not willing to give up their new found discussion spaces and means to address their challenges. And neighbouring communities have been clamouring for their own intervention, a testament to the extent and spread of the good news. Overall the intervention has demonstrated legitimacy, effectiveness and the seeds of sustainability and spread.

We were independent and effective

We stayed principled, lived our values and kept our independence alive while maintaining our impact and effectiveness. Despite living through an undemocratic and erratic regime in Tanzania, an increasingly muscular long-term leadership in Uganda, we were able to stay true to our core. Although we faced and made difficult choices during our careful navigation of the context, at no point did we have to entirely sacrifice the values that drive us. At the same time, we stayed focused on outcomes even in these challenging circumstances. As custodians of public resources we are always asking ourselves hard questions about our work to focus on making big change happen.

We worked coherently and strategically

Our mission areas and different units worked better together, we had more strategic coherence in our plans and as an organisation. We invested energy in bringing synergistic working to life: our diverse portfolio was more strongly woven together and our interventions resonated and amplified each other. We also capitalised much better on cross-country learning especially for program design and even in trying to leverage relationships with the government. We must continue to build on this success and take advantage of the three contexts in which we operate and our learning posture.

What we got wrong

We produced islands of happiness

When we step back, reflect and survey the wider universe of effects or impact from our work, we remain restless. Although we can point to a range of effects from our work, we cannot speak to wider or more systematic change in the lives of ordinary citizens. Experiences of democratic rights are subject to global forces and national political dynamics over which we have no control and little influence. In this 2024-27 strategy, we seek to deepen our focus on wide scale systematic change. This means both expanding our ambition while sharpening our focus. By exerting the bulk of our collective effort in trying to generate specific changes in the systems that determine government-citizen relations at the local level, we aim to connect the dots of our effects to bring real change in

our three countries of work.

We leaned towards processes instead of people

Too often, civil society organisations get caught up in the endless cycle of policy engagement, exerting countless energy and effort in crafting the perfect documents. The final product falls far short of our dreams and desires and ends up neatly packed on a cupboard with little or no resemblance to reality, and little hope of ever being meaningfully implemented. At the same time, our governments seduce us with opportunities to influence changes in these critical guiding documents. Although the framework documents determining our governance structures and our priorities are an important piece of the puzzle, they are just one piece. It is incumbent on social justice actors to keep firmly focused on changing people's lives; the work we do - even when it focuses on changing documents - must bring meaningful felt differences for citizens.

Our engagement with government was broad but not deep

Although our links to and work with government institutions has varied across countries, we have largely focused on engaging as many different government institutions as we can. We engage extensively over data or interventions in which we both have interest and then move on to new institutions. The volume of our work has also meant we have been weaker at following up with the government on commitments or offers made and we have sometimes been unable to follow through on requests made to us. By focusing on select institutions that we are seeking to transform in this new strategy, we aim to address this gap.

We were not deliberate in connecting political and economic rights

Across the world, democracy activists and advocates are realising too late that democracy may not always automatically deliver on people's economic and social service needs. In order to promote the benefits of open civic space and democratic values, we have important work to do in connecting these to people's lived challenges. One of the great successes of our strategic partner, Equality for Growth, is their capacity to directly connect women entrepreneurs in markets' economic aspirations - to sell their products without harassment, non-payment and over-taxation - to their political rights including voice and leadership. But this insight equally applies to our granular work in communities: we need to ensure that change agents' economic needs are taken care of to ensure they continue to be willing to spend their time and energy in follow up and engage on behalf of their communities.

6. The problems we want to address

The current global context, and the main lessons from our own work surface four interconnected problems for Twaweza to address:

- 1. Citizens are unable to solve their problems or influence the forces that shape their lives, that is they have very little agency, and they feel neglected and disrespected**
- 2. Governments are struggling to solve citizens' problems as their approaches do not include citizens' inputs.**
- 3. Civil society is weak and civic space is fragile.**
- 4. Relations between citizens, particularly marginalised majorities such as women and youth, and government are characterised by low trust, and low levels of collective problem-solving.**

Addressing these issues can provide a way for Kenyan, Tanzanian and Ugandan citizens working with their governments, to collaboratively navigate a complex and changing world.

7. The World We Want

In light of this changing and turbulent context, our enduring vision remains even more powerfully relevant.

Our vision

We believe in an open society, built on the human impulse to make a difference; where information and ideas flow, all citizens engage, and authorities are accountable to the people.

In this society:

1. **Citizen agency is enriched:** Citizens - particularly women, young people, people with disabilities and geographically excluded populations - have the ability, willingness and opportunity to articulate their problems, come together to discuss them, express their views in the public sphere and act to address these challenges. They are acting, organising for change, and using multiple strategies to do so, supported by a stronger and more effective civil society sector.
2. **Government responsiveness is enhanced:** Local governments and ministries take account of citizen concerns and voices, engage constructively with civil society organizations, and act in response.
3. **Citizen-government relations are improved:** Institutions, norms and practices protect and promote conditions - openness, access to information, inclusion and accountability - that enable people to freely interact with each other and with their governments. These improved practices are felt in the lives of ordinary people, especially for women and young people.

Our strategic institutional and people level outcomes

We are aiming for ambitious strategic outcomes at two levels: institutional outcomes and people level outcomes. Our overarching objective is to change how local government behaves (i.e., systems change) in order to improve the lives of ordinary citizens, especially women and youth (i.e., impact at scale). This overarching objective reflects our expanded ambition to contribute to deep change through a sharper focus on government behaviour.

Our institutional level outcomes, characterised by more inclusive and responsive, open and accountable local and national government practices, will be achieved through close, sustained engagement with the relevant oversight ministry, department or agency. The underlying principles of our proven animation approach will be a central element of our engagement that will be reinforced through our work with civic coalitions and with the media. The core agenda is to prompt these institutions to embody more responsive and inclusive principles and approaches which will in turn unlock a myriad of local challenges; a democratic posture in local governments and their oversight and support institutions will promote better and more development.

Our people level outcomes, will be the result of the positive changes in local government practices (improved institutional behaviour, driven by national directives and frameworks) that our engagement will have contributed to. Our aspirations reflect our values orientation: self-efficacy is a determinant and outcome of citizen agency which we believe is the core solution to the development challenges facing East Africa; and research in Kenya has shown that residents of Kibera

report negative feelings when they are treated disrespectfully and conversely their well-being and sense of efficacy improve when they are treated with respect¹³.

People Level Outcomes

More citizens, particularly marginalised majorities such as women and youth, are leading more dignified lives with improved service delivery, enhanced agency, self-efficacy, equity and respect.

- Citizens, particularly marginalised majorities such as women and youth, report being treated with respect in their recent interactions with their local government through the village or council meeting.
- Citizens, particularly marginalised majorities such as women and youth, rate themselves as having strong self-efficacy particularly in terms of local government engagement to solve their problems.
- Citizens, particularly marginalised majorities such as women and youth, report improvements in public service delivery.

Institutional Outcomes

Our institutional outcomes articulate the critical touch points between local governments and citizens, to encourage responsiveness from institutions of both representation and service delivery. We are seeking government responsiveness to citizens in key spaces in each country. We acknowledge the multitude of broken links in the essential system of government planning and execution: between what is planned and budgeted, what is budgeted and disbursed, between what is disbursed and used, between what was done and the plans. By using local government as our entry point, we seek to address the entire cycle, invigorating it through citizen agency and showing the value of promoting inclusive citizen participation to government at multiple levels.

We will map how the institutions and practices we want to engage with are organised. We will then chart a path towards the perception and behaviour changes we wish to see as articulated in the table below (details are in Annex 1).

¹³ <https://dignityproject.net/experiences-of-disrespect/>

Tanzania	Kenya	Uganda
<p><u>Proactive national institutions</u> The ministry responsible for local government engenders transparency, participation and accountability in statutory meetings under their custodianship with an emphasis on planning and budgeting engagements; ministry officials practise active listening, openness and responsiveness in their community engagements.</p>	<p><u>Proactive national institutions</u> The national legislature strengthens legal requirements for minimum standards for public participation at county and national level and holds the national executive accountable for more effective and inclusive public consultation on key national issues.</p>	<p><u>Proactive national institutions</u> The ministry of local government enforces compliance with the development planning guidelines across local governments to encourage inclusion of community priorities during the village consultative planning meetings; and promotes mechanisms for regular (quarterly) village feedback meetings aligned to the quarterly fund disbursements from the Ministry of Finance.</p> <p>The ministry allocates some of the Discretionary Development Equalisation Grant to fund citizen priorities at the LC 3 and LC 5 levels</p>
	<p>The Council of Governors and the County Assemblies Forum influence, and the State Department for Devolution facilitates, more counties to domesticate and implement the national law on public participation in particular through establishing departments for public participation</p>	<p>The Office of the Prime Minister assesses local governments' inclusion and accountability as part of its framework for monitoring local governments, and incorporates citizens' views about local government as sources of information for this assessment</p>
<p><u>Inclusive local government planning</u> Local governments align local and central government plans in the interests of citizens; effectively facilitate full district/municipal councils in executing their mandates and employ transparency, accountability and participation in their functioning.</p>	<p><u>Inclusive local government planning</u> Counties constitute ward project management committees that include diverse citizen representatives, especially young women, with the mandate to entrench deeper accountability and to engage citizens in design, monitoring and providing feedback on service delivery projects in their counties.</p>	<p><u>Inclusive local government planning</u> District and sub-district technical planning committees prioritise citizen inputs in local plans, contribute to more effective statutory village planning meetings and work to align local and central government plans in the interests of citizens.</p>

Tanzania	Kenya	Uganda
<p><u>Regular and dynamic village meetings</u> Village meetings are held on a regular basis; they are well attended by community members, especially women and young people, who contribute to discussions, hold their local leaders to account and are willing to support proposed development activities, with a particular emphasis on meetings concerned with village level planning and budgeting.</p>	<p><u>Regular and dynamic village meetings</u> Ward level in-county public participation events are held on a regular basis; they are well attended by diverse representatives of community members, especially women and young people, who contribute to discussions, hold their local leaders to account and are willing to support proposed development activities, with a particular emphasis on meetings concerned with annual ward level planning and budgeting.</p>	<p><u>Regular and dynamic village meetings</u> Statutory consultative planning village meetings are held annually; they are well attended by community members, especially women and young people, who contribute to discussions, hold their local leaders to account and are willing to support proposed development activities</p>
<p><u>Amplifying an inclusive narrative</u> A cohort of actors from influential groups including MPs, artists, media, trade unions and associations, religious leaders, NGOs and the private sector embrace rigorous evidence and citizen engagement and use their platforms and voices to influence narratives and advocate for evidence, inclusion and democratic values.</p>	<p><u>Amplifying an inclusive narrative</u> More counties apply to join the Open Government Partnership Local; national engagement becomes increasingly institutionalised among more diverse actors</p>	<p><u>Amplifying an inclusive narrative</u> A cohort of actors from influential groups including MPs, artists, media, trade unions and associations, religious leaders, NGOs and the private sector embrace rigorous evidence and citizen engagement and use their platforms and voices to influence narratives and advocate for evidence, inclusion and democratic values.</p>
<p><u>Expanding civic space and strengthening civil society</u> National legal changes that have a significant impact on civil society operations are informed by the voices of those affected and reflect more democratic values.</p>		

8. How We Will Make It Happen

Our role

We will directly implement three connected missions that together will generate experiential evidence, ideas and lessons with which to motivate critical national institutions.

Mission 1: Demonstrating citizen agency and government responsiveness to build trust

Mission 2: Generating evidence to inform better decisions and actions

Mission 3 (NEW): Strengthening civil society to enhance legitimacy and impact

Missions 1 and 2 are a reflection and a refinement of the same missions from our 2019-23 strategy. Mission 3 is new and focuses on strengthening the civil society ecosystem in country and across the region. (See Annex 2 for a detailed write up of the three Missions).

Collectively, the three missions will exert a powerful influence on two groups of national institutions, namely ministries responsible for local government, and national parliaments, to embody, encourage and implement the inclusion of citizens and accountability to them.

Mission 1: Demonstrating citizen agency and government responsiveness to build trust

We demonstrate the power of citizen agency and government responsiveness in action to foster collaboration and trust between citizens and their governments.

What is new (mission refinements):

- An enhanced role for more community members beyond the change agents to encourage wider ownership of the work and ensure the sustainability and continuity of the actions
- More support in community problematising to enable communities to understand the roots of their issues and design more innovative solutions
- To avoid the trap of working to create islands of success, we are improving connections between hyper-local work and creating impact at scale
- To more deliberately spread the approach locally to promote ownership and expectations among communities
- Deliberate convening to help spread animation approaches and advocacy
- Catalysing uptake of animation as a methodology to spread the approach and increase pressure on local and national governments to transform existing engagements

Mission 2: Generating evidence for better decisions and actions by citizens and government

We generate evidence to enhance insight, prompt debate and amplify voices for better decisions and actions by citizens and government.

What is new (mission refinements):

- Boosted national samples for local representation to produce new analyses and insight
- Voices from specific groups or sectors (e.g., bodaboda drivers, civil servants, paralegals) as a unique signature for Twaweza with potential for informing change
- Proactively exploring alternative means to amplify voice in Tanzania
- Processing and framing monitoring and evaluation data as local evidence for engagement to help improve local government approaches to citizens

- Emphasis on formative research, creative methodologies
- Expanding the reach and range of Sauti za Wananchi deliberately to cultivate more ambassadors and supporters

Mission 3 (NEW): Strengthening civil society to enhance legitimacy and impact

We support and strengthen selected civil society organizations and partners to enhance individual and collective effectiveness, legitimacy and impact. We will support individual mission-driven CSOs to enhance their strategic clarity, improve operational efficiency and achieve stronger impact. We will convene and participate in national and regional coalitions to protect and expand the space for collective civic action. We will use our global profile to shape global standards and norms, and to advocate specifically for better resourcing mechanisms for “local” civil society actors.

Persuading national and local government institutions to embody accountability and inclusion

Our overall objective is to change how local government behaves by embodying transparency, inclusion and accountability (i.e., systems change) in order to improve the lives of ordinary citizens, especially women and youth (i.e., impact at scale). We will work on the following three levers to transform local government institutions:

1. **Shaping mental models** through peer persuasion and demonstrating success, assertively, loudly and widely.
2. **Infusing new energy into existing mechanisms** by understanding how local priorities feed into national and local decisions, we will seek to integrate the ingredients of participatory action research (animation) underlying our transformative impact in specific communities into existing government processes.
3. **Reforming laws and policies, advocating for directives and circulars.** While laws and policies (principles) can drive institutional transformation, directives, circulars and guidelines (the “rules”) have a more immediate impact on citizens' lived reality because they determine how government administration is done and public officials behave.

Our engagement will consist of the following three interconnected approaches:

1. **Direct engagement with government** through which we bring our evidence, experience and lessons to bear, leverage our relationships and networks, informed by our evolving knowledge of the incentives and opportunities within the system to make change happen.
2. **Mobilising and channelling external voices** of committed and influential advocates for citizen engagement, inclusion, evidence and democratic values. These will include individuals or organisations, networks or associations, from any sector (trade unions, religious associations, artists). Our extensive national media engagement will serve similar aims.
3. **Catalysing peer internal pressure and inspiration** whereby those local government champions from the communities and districts/counties in which we work, together with those in neighbouring areas who have seen the benefits of our approaches, will endorse and proactively engage with their ministry. Members of Parliament will use their roles to pressure the relevant ministries on the same. And peer ministries, engaged through our evidence, will also provide endorsement of the value of these approaches.

Should a problem be identified across communities in multiple districts in which Twaweza is

working, we will validate its wider national relevance through Sauti za Wananchi. For those issues that affect a majority of citizens of Kenya, Tanzania or Uganda, we will convene important actors together for an open dialogue of the problem and to develop a roadmap for a way forward. This will demonstrate the value of citizen feedback to a wider cohort of government institutions, raising the prospects of working at scale.

Tactics and Values

We will make use of the following tactics and approaches to achieve the three missions:

1. **Credible Evidence** – rigorously collected and compellingly communicated, and focused on citizens' lived experiences, will underpin all of our work and learning
2. **Intentional Organising** – we deploy our convening power, capacity and influence to bring people and organisations together in the service of wider aims.
3. **Equitable Partnerships** – we foster partnerships with diverse actors to better achieve our aims and embed our approaches and values while paying due attention to power dynamics
4. **Empathetic Engagement** – we are critical and supportive, creative and analytical, speaking to the motivations and barriers of those we seek to persuade.
5. **Compelling stories** – we view media as a critical partner in all of our work and use debate, transparency, agenda-setting, accountability and story-telling in the media to further all our objectives

We will be guided by the following values:

1. **Collaborative**
We work with and learn from others, to pursue common interests, knowing that the most powerful things can only be achieved when we pull together our strengths.
2. **Transparent**
We practice what we preach, foster a culture of deep transparency, disclose all by default (except a narrow aspect that is private and confidential), be honest about failure and success, and share widely.
3. **Imaginative**
We think anew, reframe, wonder, imagine possibilities beyond traditional boundaries. Driven by a thirst for learning, we question constantly and spur unusual ideas, aspirations and action.
4. **Strategic**
We seek big challenges and appreciate the power of clear thinking and sound judgments about scale, scope, timing, connection, implementation, impact and durability.
5. **Rigorous**
We seek quality – attention to detail, clarity and elegance – in everything that we do.
6. **Inclusive**
We expend effort to ensure that traditionally excluded groups are part of our work, with an emphasis on marginalised majorities.

Our building blocks and progress markers

Our experience and that of our partners over the last fifteen years has taught us that

achieving these objectives will require a set of common building blocks. Time and again, and at all levels of society, we see that achieving enriched citizen agency, enhanced government responsiveness, and improved citizen-government relations depend heavily on the readiness of individuals and institutions sitting on both sides of the social contract.

Twaweza develops, nurtures and builds these elements which support the effectiveness of citizen agency and government responsiveness for better relations and improved outcomes (improved service delivery and livelihoods). We will infuse our work with the spirit of exchange – providing our ideas and evidence to government, while being receptive to their agendas and ideas. These building blocks are the intangible ingredients we develop and unleash within and between partners to achieve the transformative progress described:

1. **Collaboration and Co-creation (to agree on a common set of objectives and actions to achieve them).** This involves nurturing empathy and building trusting relationships with and between citizens, civil society and government officials. By working collaboratively together with government, we can contribute to more lasting outcomes.

2. **Tools and Skills (competence to problematise, prioritise and plan).** This involves growing citizens’ technical skills to identify and solve problems from concept to execution. By problematising well, we can identify more creative and lasting solutions. In addition, promoting citizens’ responsiveness to enhanced efforts from local governments to increase participation is a critical element of activating a positive feedback loop. This also encompasses civil society legitimacy, efficiency and impact; and government officials’ willingness to engage.

3. **Narratives and Spaces (protecting and promoting the enabling conditions that promote lived agency and responsiveness).** The norms, attitudes and approaches that shape how civil servants and politicians, influencers and elites, civil society and communities believe the world works and how they approach, process and respond to citizen agency and government accountability.

To track our achievement in these critical areas, we will hold ourselves accountable for key progress markers. These progress markers are direct outcomes from our work and thus take place in targeted intervention communities, spaces and actors.

Building block	Progress Markers
Collaboration and Co-creation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In select communities in up to seven districts in Tanzania and Uganda and up to two counties in Kenya, communities and local leaders solve problems together and jointly escalate them to higher levels of government as relevant 2. Targeted government institutions and officials seek poll feedback from citizens and support the inclusion of citizens’ voices and inputs 3. Select civil society organisations are better managed and do more effective work using data and inclusive participatory techniques; the regulatory environment for civil society in Tanzania is more inclusive of sector voices 4. Officials in targeted institutions seek Twaweza’s support for problem-solving, new ideas and evidence.

Tools and Capacities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In select communities in up to seven districts in Tanzania and Uganda and up to two counties in Kenya, community members, particularly young people and women, improve their ability to negotiate with local government, and analyse their problems 2. Greater use of Sauti za Wananchi data and other evidence, ideas and insights by diverse civil society actors and coalitions and by officials in targeted institutions 3. There is more grounded and impactful work among select civil society actors; and more effective joint advocacy in Tanzania around civic space regulations 4. Officials in targeted institutions use new techniques for engaging citizens and new insights from evidence
Narratives and Spaces	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In select communities in up to seven districts in Tanzania and Uganda and up to two counties in Kenya, budget and expenditure reports are shared at local meetings, and local leaders invite citizen feedback especially from women and youth 2. National problems, as identified in numerous communities and validated through national data, are acknowledged and discussed by a range of national government stakeholders including legislators, ministries and agencies who collectively plan for solutions 3. Constructive and regular media debate around Twaweza’s data, work and democratic values more broadly including highlighting the positive role of civil society 4. Officials in targeted institutions invite citizen feedback and engagement and demonstrate positive/constructive attitude towards civil society

9. Our Theory of Change

We aim to work through the [local government] system to make change at scale. Our Theory of Change is as follows:

IF we engage, effectively and empathetically, with targeted public institution(s) responsible for local government, THEN they will use their political, financial, legal and other levers to transform how citizens are included in planning, budgeting, execution and evaluation at the local level. AS A RESULT, citizens, especially women, youth and people with disabilities will feel respected in their interactions with leaders and civil servants/in village meetings, enhance their sense of self-efficacy and experience improved services.

Our engagement with the institutions which coordinate local government will involve the following tactics and approaches:

- Twaweza will adapt the evidence and lessons from our work and curate a series of compelling ideas for the central government institutions responsible for local governments on the means by which they can transform the statutory public engagement spaces over which they have oversight or in which they engage directly. And we will provide local and national evidence including poll data to inform these institutions and monitor progress. Our empathetic relationships, the rigour of our evidence, the depth of our experience in communities, the demonstrable success of our approach and our willingness to support the officials in this process will be our assets and offers to these institutions.

- Twaweza will partner with a community of influencers, other CSOs – to spread the animation approach – media and animators’ networks from our own and others’ interventions to advocate collectively for these ideas to be taken up
- Similarly, Twaweza will engage MPs to hold the institutions of local government to task for their means and methods of engaging people, particularly the most excluded.
- The local government officials who are in and around intervention communities will echo these messages through their own channels and the media due to the positive environment generated through animation, and thus will generate internal demand within government.
- Twaweza’s data collection partnerships with other government institutions will also provide a set of supportive reference points for the institutions responsible for local government both in terms of Twaweza’s credibility and the value of citizen feedback.

All of this engagement is brought to life by our direct implementation.

Underlying our work is a solid body of evidence for our advocacy. Evidence on the workings of local government, of the change brought by the intervention, of citizens’ views and experiences, and evidence from trials of new approaches.

Our intervention reverberates out from the participatory action research (animation) approach. In a selection of communities across the countries in which we work, we demonstrate the value of open civic space and democratic values in concrete terms through solving citizens’ lived and prioritised problems. The work models collaboration in action and makes both citizens and local governments, often initially hostile, ambassadors and propagators of the approach. Service delivery and social justice problems are solved, new possibilities and eventually new norms for citizen government interaction are generated. These are entrenched through public screenings featuring success stories from the work and local media engagement; the widespread communication helps to provide a supportive environment for the actors in this work and for local government as well as cementing community expectations around these new models of interaction, collaboration and delivery. The public engagement also prompts demand from neighbouring communities for a similar intervention and local change agents, local government, partners and committee members provide training and support to other communities to initiate their own version of the intervention through improving their local village and council meetings. Twaweza also helps to amplify other community and local government empowerment initiatives for magnified impact.

Convenings and capacity sessions with other civil society organisations help to further spread the approach and infuse the power of collectives and wider network-building among the local change agents, partners and committee members as well as restoking their enthusiasm and energy, providing opportunities for reflection and recuperation.

Our support to the civil society sector, using our advocacy and engagement techniques to broaden the space in which these actors operate, demonstrating effectiveness and impact as well as supporting others to do the same, and promoting positive narratives about the value of civil society will contribute to a more open environment for enhanced government-citizen collaboration and trust. And through this local demonstration of democratic values in practice, the media amplification of ideas, evidence and accountability, legislative advocacy, organising local change agents and building allies and coalitions we will contribute to expanding civic space.

10. Our big bets

Our institutional outcomes articulate the critical touch points between local governments and citizens. We seek to persuade institutions of both representation (councils, Parliament) and service delivery (local government ministries and agencies). We are seeking to catalyze government responsiveness to citizens in key spaces in each country. We shall map how the spaces we seek to engage with are organised, identify critical actors and chart a pathway to achieving the behavioural changes we wish to see along the lines of the progress markers indicated above and in our theory of change.

Problem Status	Hypotheses	Research/Evaluation approach
<p>CSO engagements with government insufficiently consider the motivations or obstacles faced by government officials. CSOs have often overlooked ongoing processes and strategies on the side of government, and focused on pointing out the problems without offering concrete solutions. Moreover, these engagements tend to be ad hoc, reactionary, piecemeal and temporary. While CSO engagements with the government have been guided by clear outputs, attention to long lasting outcomes (behavioural changes) has been less sustained. As a result, policy engagement successes have tended to be one off, remain largely on paper without being embedded in the minds and hearts of government officials and consequently having little meaningful effect on people’s lives.</p>	<p>Big Bet #1: <i>Engagement through credible evidence, hyper-local experience and empathetic relationships inspires relevant national institutions to embody inclusion, transparency and accountability in statutory meetings/procedures under their custodianship.</i></p> <p>For these engagements to be effective, they should entail:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • jointly agreeing on challenges; • proposing actionable solutions; • providing advisory services and support, and encouragement for implementation 	<p>We will use outcome mapping approach to articulate the changes we intend to contribute among the targeted government officials including actors in the legislative cycle. We will document these engagements and use rapid response debrief sessions to ensure that we maintain empathy, use of evidence and grounding in experience. We will assess their initial behaviour and track changes over time using observational data, annual and opportunistic interviews.</p> <p>Research questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Extent to which national level institutions (both government officials and policy documents) support meaningful citizen participation and their desire, opportunities and constraints to do so 2. Extent to which national level institutions encourage local governments to embody inclusion, transparency and accountability in statutory meetings/procedures and their willingness, opportunities and constraints to do so <p>Data collection approaches: outcome mapping journals/report; key informant interviews; review of relevant documents; direct field observation; and survey of citizens on their views on whether government officials embrace (or not) inclusion, transparency and accountability in executing their duties.</p>

Problem Status	Hypotheses	Research/Evaluation approach
<p>The history of centralised top-down development planning and implementation has compelled local governments to continue being driven to action by directives and instructions from supervisory institutions. Despite the adoption of decentralised or devolved government in all three countries, these directives from national level institutions tend to overrule or disregard inputs from participatory bottom-up planning and citizen engagement. Also, even when democratic instructions and imperatives exist, local governments are limited in their capacity to implement these due to a lack of: motivation, belief that it is possible and ideas and examples of how to make them happen.</p>	<p>Big Bet #2. <i>The combination of the persuasion from above (Big Bet #1), inspiration from peer local authorities (where Twaweza and partners implement our work), advocacy from civil society, media and from citizens (through their networks) encourages early adopter local governments to embody inclusion and accountability. These initial actions lead to: positive development outcomes, and greater trust from citizens, which encourages other local governments to learn about and adopt these behaviours, sparking appetite among more of their peers.</i></p>	<p>We will assess whether our interventions have contributed towards making local governments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritise citizen-focused plans • Align central and local government plans in the interests of citizens • Effectively facilitate people’s representative organs in executing their mandates <p>In early 2024, we will conduct exploratory research to establish the situation of local governments along the three broad outcome areas stated above and track changes over time.</p> <p>We will use different methodologies including surveys and interviews to assess progress towards these outcomes. We will concentrate initially on neighbouring local governments from our intervention areas and then expand our scope to understand dynamics in a wider pool of local governments through official data, citizen and civil servant surveys, citizen monitoring.</p> <p>The critical feedback exercise will establish stakeholders’ (particularly specific local government officials’) views on their own behavioural changes as well as the relevance and contribution of our interventions in realising the intended behavioral changes.</p>
<p>Village meetings are dysfunctional and exclusive in practice due to disappointment and low expectations on the side of citizens, fear of accountability on the side of local leaders and a lack of prioritisation of citizen feedback and participation among both national and local government institutions. Even those local leaders that are more</p>	<p>Big Bet #3. <i>Actions by local change agents (including people’s committee members) increase citizens’ ability, motivation and opportunity to participate in decisions and development. In turn, active citizens (citizens, change agents and people’s committee members) encourage local leaders/governments to be more responsive through the village meeting.</i></p>	<p>Through a combination of research methods in social sciences, we will regularly collect and analyse data on the following outcome variables: statutory meetings held, attendance in meetings (disaggregated according to gender and age), financial transparency through meetings, participation in meetings, citizen participation in community projects’ planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, local government responsiveness in delivering/improve public service and engaging citizens in decisions; collaboration between village leaders and citizens.</p>

Problem Status	Hypotheses	Research/Evaluation approach
<p>democratically oriented are discouraged by the status quo and lack of response and appreciation for their efforts in this direction from citizens.</p>	<p>Active citizens and responsive local governments will demonstrate that it is desirable and possible to forge trusting and collaborative citizen-government relations, encouraged by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the increasingly democratic orientation of the institutional framework • local public communication (screenings, media); • local CSO advocacy and increasing uptake of participatory action research approaches by NGOs; • national narrative work (media, events); national coalition advocacy 	<p>Research methods will include: Baseline, midline and endline evaluation exercises combining multiple qualitative and quantitative approaches and the outcome mapping approach.</p>
<p>Despite years of demonstrating the importance of credible evidence and citizen participation in decision making, not all actors embrace these ideas and values. There are tendencies towards territorialism in speaking for issues as well as self-interested advocacy on issues that directly affect a particular group, an unwillingness to stand more broadly for values. Many civil society and accountability actors within government do not sufficiently use their platforms and voices to influence narratives and advocate for inclusion and other democratic values.</p>	<p>Big Bet #4. <i>Compelling communications and creative and constructive convenings inspire a cohort of actors to use their platforms and voices to influence narratives and advocate for evidence, inclusion and accountability.</i></p>	<p>We will evaluate whether and how our interventions have contributed to catalysing a cohort of influential groups to use their platforms and voices to influence narratives and advocate for evidence, inclusion and accountability.</p> <p>The outcome mapping approach will be our main research and evaluation tool. At the start of our new strategy, we will establish a list of targeted actors and articulate the intended behavioural changes (expect to see, like to see and love to see). Every three months, we will synthesise the data from our outcome mapping exercise to track progress in behavioural changes and inform subsequent design and implementation of engagement plans.</p> <p>Our annual critical feedback exercise will also provide insight into our progress as well as our media monitoring.</p>

Problem Status	Hypotheses	Research/Evaluation approach
<p>Our own experience reveals that the current context discourages cross-sectoral collaboration among a range of actors including MPs, artists, media, religious leaders, civil society and the private sector. In addition, influential social and professional groups are largely disinclined to empathise with each other and see the commonality in their agendas or objectives. They have hardly ever seen successful instances of intentional organising and convening that produces transformative outcomes and have often been deliberately disorganised or co-opted by authorities.</p>		<p>We will document any specific success stories in multimedia.</p>
<p>Currently, legislative advocacy is disjointed, reactive and focused on the public elements of the process. CSOs tend to focus on laws that directly affect them. Little regard is given to the priorities and interests of citizens.</p>	<p>Big Bet #5. <i>Through engaging with credible evidence, hyper-local experience and empathetic relationships, Twaweza and her partners prompt positive legal changes around civic space issues, particularly the regulatory environment for CSOs.</i></p> <p>For this advocacy to be effective, it should entail:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collective demand • Include the parliamentary secretariat • Engage across the legislative process 	<p>We seek to explore both the process and the outcomes of legislative engagement in our evaluation. We will document our work through rich descriptions and exploration of the levels of inclusion and responsiveness throughout the legislative process for key laws regulating civil society operations. We will conduct analysis of relevant legislations to understand whether our proposals have been adopted or influenced any further amendments. We will seek affirmation of our role and the associations with our participation in legislative processes through the annual critical feedback exercise. And more broadly, we will conduct assessments of the civic space context in 2024, 2026 and 2027.</p>

11. Who we will work with

Partners and Collaborators

Twaweza values partnerships and collaborations deeply, recognising that we are stronger together, that we can learn so much from others and that we can complement each other's efforts.

Over our strategy, we will work with the following:

- Local governments in select geographies
- Ministries, departments, agencies responsible for local government
- Local partners in select geographies to promote and implement participatory work
- Movements, societies, associations, coalitions and networks
- Peer civil society organisations
- Media – online and offline
- Parliamentary secretariats and select MPs
- Government institutions with appetite for citizens' views
- Influencers including trade unions, religious leaders and the private sector
- Development partners
- Local CSOs with appetite for participatory community work
- Non-traditional civil society actors

12. Under the Hood: Budget and Staffing

Budget

The total budget for the four-year strategic period is USD 31.8 million, divided across Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda and the Regional Office. The budget is organised around the mission areas.

The 2024 - 2027 strategic plan budget is based on our previous years' experience. The first four years of the 2019 - 23 strategic plan had an average budget utilisation of 84%, which was slightly below the governance and management manual's requirement of not exceeding a 15% margin of over/under budget deviations. The main reason for this lower budget utilisation was the significant impact of Covid-19 on our implementation and achievement in 2020, when we spent only 75% of our budget. The other years' budget utilisation was within the acceptable range.

By using our online accounting system, which enables us to monitor our budget execution in real time, and the window to revise our budget allocations at midyear, we are confident that our annual budget estimates are realistic and predictable.

DESCRIPTION	2024	2025	2026	2027	TOTAL
Mission 1: Demonstrating agency and responsiveness					
Tanzania	504,512	628,713	739,084	773,243	2,645,552
Uganda	551,944	580,388	769,927	723,169	2,625,428
Kenya	162,754	170,279	250,557	278,613	862,202
Regional Office	340,721	374,793	412,272	453,500	1,581,286

Total - Demonstrating agency and responsiveness	1,559,931	1,754,173	2,171,840	2,228,524	7,714,469
Mission 2: Evidence					
Tanzania	1,066,375	1,049,096	920,572	538,801	3,574,843
Uganda	410,376	672,764	686,175	450,713	2,220,028
Kenya	561,488	288,352	295,774	553,809	1,699,423
Regional Office	654,937	713,430	777,073	846,380	2,991,820
Total - Evidence	2,693,176	2,723,642	2,679,594	2,389,703	10,486,114
Mission 3 - Strengthening civil society					
Tanzania	300,000	315,000	330,750	347,288	1,293,038
Uganda	26,500	27,000	42,000	36,000	131,500
Kenya	23,000	27,000	33,000	36,000	119,000
Regional Office	10,000	13,000	15,000	15,000	53,000
Total - Strengthening civil society	359,500	382,000	420,750	434,288	1,596,538
Making the case: Influencing institutions					
Tanzania	224,964	237,210	249,656	262,322	974,152
Uganda	246,027	260,129	274,592	289,451	1,070,199
Kenya	217,892	229,181	240,549	252,004	939,626
Regional Office	407,955	444,751	484,826	528,509	1,866,041
Total - Influencing institutions	1,096,838	1,171,271	1,249,623	1,332,285	4,850,018
Operations and finance					
Tanzania	429,181	457,166	486,455	517,180	1,889,982
Uganda	222,151	238,596	256,108	274,793	991,648
Kenya	184,089	197,146	210,973	225,648	817,857
Regional Office	520,323	567,355	618,591	674,450	2,380,718
Total - Operations and Finance	1,355,744	1,460,263	1,572,127	1,692,071	6,080,204
Governance and management					
Regional office	247,096	267,405	289,306	312,956	1,116,763
Total - Governance and management	247,096	267,405	289,306	312,956	1,116,763
Grand total	7,312,285	7,758,754	8,383,239	8,389,827	31,844,105

Staffing

The organisation will continue to be headed by the Executive Director who reports to the Twaweza Board of Directors. At the next, programmatic level, Twaweza shall have three programme directors who will combine responsibilities for Twaweza's four work components/functions as follows:

- 1) Director of Voice and Participation will combine leading the Sauti za Wananchi initiative across the three countries as well as the localised community work to promote citizen agency. The Director will be assisted by senior staff for both areas of work.
- 2) Director of Learning and Strategy, to lead a core element of Twaweza's work and approach: careful design of initiatives, close monitoring of execution and results, deep reflection about the outcomes and emerging lessons. The Director will be assisted by senior staff for feedback and monitoring, as well as learning and evaluation.
- 3) Director of Engagement and Advocacy, to strategise and execute a portfolio of advocacy initiatives. They will articulate a powerful and productive link between the granular local work and the broad national engagement as well as lead on much of the work to strengthen civil society.

The Executive Director and the three program directors, country leads (where they are not directors) and the senior managers (operations and finance) shall together constitute the senior management team (total of seven), which shall be chaired by the Executive Director. This leadership team shall be responsible for strategic and operational decisions and execution.

Each director, with guidance from the Executive Director, will build a team constituting of a range of staff that have the requisite skills, experience, and qualifications for the job. A second level of management has been created within Twaweza to better bridge management by the directors over the entire team. This full program management team shall also include the country representatives, the voice, participation, advocacy and engagement managers, and the finance and administration managers.

The Twaweza headquarters remain in Dar es Salaam, and the Executive Director will oversee and coordinate work in Tanzania. For Kenya and Uganda, the Executive Director will appoint one resident senior staff member, from within the country team, to serve as the coordinator and lead representative of Twaweza's work in the country.

The proposed number of staff per component and location (excluding Directors and the Executive Director) is as follows (see Annex 5 for the organogram):

	Tanzania	Uganda	Kenya	TOTAL
Voice and Participation	3	4	4	11
Advocacy and Engagement	5	2	1	8
Learning and Strategy	3	2	1	6
Finance and Operations	11	4	3	18
Executive Director's office	3			3
TOTAL	25	12	9	46

Twaweza Strategy 2024 – 2027

Annexes



Annex 1 – Institutional Outcomes

Annex 2 – Missions in detail

Annex 3 – Learning Strategy

Annex 4 – Achievements 2019-2023

Annex 5 - Organogram

Annex 1: On institutional outcomes

In our 2024-27 strategy we have articulated a series of ambitious institutional outcomes which together comprise our vision for national and systemic change. Below, we describe the spaces we seek to influence and the ways in which we wish to make change. These outcomes will ultimately reflect our success (or failure) to engage government institutions with our evidence, experience and lessons in a compelling way that prompts them to change their own policies and practice.

Given the overlap in structure and context between Tanzania and Uganda, these outcomes are grouped in some cases while in Kenya, with its radically devolved governance structures, our emphasis and approach will be different. Although we articulate national and local institutional outcomes, our primary pathway to achieve these changes is through national level engagement reinforced by local implementation and diffusion of our approach, widespread media engagement, and a cohort of allies.

NATIONAL

Ministry of local government oversight and listening visits (Tanzania)

In Tanzania, the ministry responsible for local government sets the policies, tone and pace for hundreds of local governments across the country. Given the strong hierarchies, national officials in this ministry also exercise power over local government officials, and enforce compliance.

These arrangements are largely governed by legal mechanisms - the Local Government (District Authorities) Act in particular which outlines the functions of local governments and their obligations to their ministry – and by the substantial budget disbursements allocated each year for the ministry to transmit to local government authorities across the country. In addition, almost all local government personnel have the ministry of local government as their supervisory authority.

In terms of policy provisions, the National Decentralisation Policy process has stalled; if approved and implemented the policy devolves important powers and fiscal autonomy to local governments and places emphasis on citizen participation. Nonetheless, the ministry of local government is implementing an ambitious Regional and Local Government Strengthening Program with significant resources behind it. This includes a pilot and current expansion of a revised Obstacles and Opportunities for Development process which ministry officials have suggested could benefit from some of the lessons of animation. In addition, ministry officials have invited Twaweza to support them with ideas to reimagine statutory meetings in urban areas in particular. Thus, there are opportunities for Twaweza to engage this ministry and a clear pathway of influence or compulsion from the national ministry to local governments.

Currently ministry and local officials' attitudes towards citizen engagement are characterised by disdain, limited appreciation for the value of citizen feedback and a deeply hierarchical culture.

At national level, our powerful lessons and experiences, and strong relationships, alongside horizontal, bottom up and external pressure will enable us to influence the ministry in two core areas: exercising their mandate over local governments to enhance accountability and inclusion while also improving their own direct engagements with communities (which largely take place in the form of listening visits).

Although we have less experience and knowledge of the means and outcomes of working to transform these direct interactions between national government officials in ministries of local government and citizens, we feel that this will be an important complementary space in which to intervene. By giving

these officials direct experience of the value of citizen feedback and engagement, we can persuade them to exercise their power over local governments to improve the effectiveness of village meetings and quality of local council performance.

Ministry of Local Government oversight (Uganda)

The Ministry of Local Government is responsible for administrative support, technical advice, guidance and mentoring requirements to execute local government development planning processes. The functionality, administration, and service delivery implemented by local governments falls under the mandate of this ministry and locally-based technical Chief Administrative Officers are contracted by and report directly to this ministry.

In addition, the ministry provides guidelines on the utilisation of the Discretionary Development Equalisation Grant (DDEG) which is the one funding stream for which there is some potential to make allocations based on citizens' local priorities.

At the same time, the ministry is not well-resourced to provide sufficient disbursements to local authorities which have been deliberately starved of resources to prevent leakage, or perhaps as a means to exercise influence on their operations. Instead, resources are collected locally, remitted to the national treasury and then a proportion of those funds are disbursed back to local authorities by the Ministry of Finance on a quarterly basis. The amount that each local government receives is in part based on what they have been able to collect alongside demographic and political factors.

So, the lines of influence from the ministry to the hundreds of local authorities across the country are less powerful than in Tanzania.

However, the positioning of the Chief Administrative Officers, with clear lines of accountability to the Ministry of Local Government, provides a space and opportunity to use our work to generate change across the country. The Chief Administrative Officers are heads of District Technical Planning Committees and so can ensure, at the behest of their employer, that these planning committees and indeed the statutory annual village meetings that input into these committees at sub-district and ultimately district level, are more inclusive and accountable. It is for Twaweza and our allies to demonstrate sufficient evidence and speak appropriately to the incentives of the ministry to ensure that they exercise their mandate over their officers to do this.

In addition, the uses of the Discretionary Development Equalisation Grant tend to be quite erratic from year to year so, again with sufficient evidence and support to the ministry as well as speaking to their incentives, there is some scope to advocate for alignment of these disbursements with citizen priorities. In collaboration with the Uganda Local Government Association (ULGA) we will advocate for a proportion of this grant to be annually allocated to community issues that are not national funding priorities to enable local government to respond to community priorities and reclaim their power to make and implement their own decisions.

Office of the Prime Minister local government monitoring (Uganda)

The Office of the Prime Minister coordinates government ministries, departments and agencies, and monitors the performance of local governments through an annual formal assessment process. We will work with them to integrate performance scores on citizen participation (regular village consultative meetings, feedback mechanisms) into the local government performance assessment framework (2017). When they are being assessed against these criteria, local government staff should feel more compelled

to convene these meetings. In addition, the assessment framework could include triangulation of the current sources of data, which are all government records and official documents, through citizen feedback.

This is also aligned with the National Development Plan 3 which describes activities to institute feedback mechanisms to capture public views on government performance, enhance citizen participation in the development process, and raise awareness of individual and group roles and responsibilities in development and decision-making.

Space for civil society (Tanzania)

In Tanzania, Twaweza can leverage our strong brand as a democracy actor to explore opportunities for holistic engagement in the legislative process. Working collaboratively in networks and coalitions, we will explore the means to generally influence actors involved in these processes as well as seek to conduct multiple closed door engagements with relevant ministries responsible for regulating the operating environment for NGOs, societies including religious associations, political parties and the media. This intensive ongoing engagement will be supported by building and propagating more positive narratives about the role of independent, critical civil society and demonstrating and enabling collaborations between diverse groups and actors.

Legislative mandates for public participation (Kenya)

The relationship and mandates between national and county governments in Kenya are fraught with complexity. In some ways the executive lacks the legitimacy to direct county governments and so influencing the system at scale can pose more of a challenge. However, central government institutions do have critical roles to play in policy-making and assessment and monitoring and the legislature also continues to be an important channel for county governments to be compelled by national level decisions.

With this in mind, we seek to influence the enactment and implementation of a national Public Participation Act or framework that sets out minimum standards for county and national level public engagement. The process to develop this law is currently ongoing and we are engaging with it.

Beyond the law on paper, we seek to support the creation of guidelines and tools to enable meaningful public participation, track implementation in a range of counties and influence key national institutions to advocate for the embedding of the framework and tools in as many counties as possible. The institutions, beyond the legislature, that we will engage include the Ministry for Internal Coordination, the State Department on Devolution, the County Assemblies Forum and the Council of Governors. We will particularly focus on these institutions promoting the enactment of public participation acts in more counties and the establishment of departments of public participation in county governments.

MPs connecting local and national (Tanzania, Uganda)

We will engage MPs whose constituencies we are working directly in and a select group of potential champions for progressive values, evidence and community engagement. They can hold the ministry of local government to account for resources to local government and for the ways in which they engage citizens. In Tanzania, they can also be supportive in our legislative advocacy around civic space and the civil society operating and regulatory environment.

LOCAL

District Councils (Tanzania)

We seek to impact at scale the local government service delivery system in Tanzania to enhance their timely development and implementation of plans that are aligned to citizens' priorities.

Currently the local system of representation (Full Council/District Council) is largely ineffective in holding the local system of service delivery to account due to their dependence on central government and the district councils for resources, partisan politics, and low capacity.

Nonetheless, the increased pressure and demand from the oversight ministries and relevant parliamentary committees - informed and persuaded by Twaweza's evidence and experiences - can lead to wider change in the functioning of the service delivery arm at local level. Again, our means of influencing these spaces at scale lies primarily through the oversight institutions but also through our direct local and media engagement, and the spread of our participatory approaches through animators themselves and through our work with local civil society organisations.

District Technical Planning Committees (Uganda)

At the district level, functional coordinating structures and accountability mechanisms including the district technical planning committee (TPC), the sub county technical planning committee, local government planning forums and the annual budget conferences provide an opportunity for integration of citizens' priority issues.

Since the planning committees fall directly under the mandate of the Chief Administrative Officers, we will seek to infuse these spaces with a renewed emphasis on citizens' priorities through our national level engagement alongside our media work and the spread of the animation methodology in neighbouring communities and through local civil society organisations. In addition, there are sub-district and district councils of elected representatives that monitor implementation of approved plans and budgets at Local Council Chair III and V levels. These chairpersons along with the head of the district council (the speaker) are members of the Uganda Local Government Association meaning we have the opportunity to reach them through a national entity.

Ward level public participation (Kenya)

Our own research shows that even counties considered to be at the forefront of living to the spirit of the Kenyan Constitution of 2012, continue to face challenges in ensuring meaningful public participation in the planning and prioritisation of development projects. Citizens complain about logistical and more existential constraints that prevent them from engaging substantively. Meetings are organised with short notice, at inconvenient times and locations, in unfamiliar languages with limited time to engage with substantive content. At the same time many Kenyans see these engagements as rubber-stamping exercises, and spaces from which critical groups including young people and women are excluded.

At the same time a number of forward-looking counties have blazed a trail forward. By enacting county-level public participation frameworks, enshrined in law, with thoughtful consideration of ensuring meaningful representation of diverse groups, particularly in planning and decision-making, and ensuring all their work is well-publicised, alongside complementary regular opportunities for citizens to feedback to their county, they have created meaningful spaces for citizen engagement, built trust and increased citizen satisfaction with their performance.

Documenting, collecting evidence and sharing these stories and tools between counties and attaching the successes to national level entitlements and international commitments, as well as sharing them in

collaborative spaces for county governments can help to spread best practice and influence more and more counties to enhance ward level planning engagements. We will deliberately trace and attempt to recreate the pathway to change that enabled Makueni's early adoption of open contracting to influence the national system for the same and consequently engender change across the country. We will also engage central government coordinating institutions to support the institutional and policy environment for improved public participation in more counties. And we will engage counties who are members of Open Government Partnership Local to spread best practices and encourage other counties to join since public participation is a key focus area for Kenya, nationally and sub-nationally.

Project Management Committees (Kenya)

Despite the strong emphasis on public participation in Kenya's devolved governance structures, Twaweza's qualitative research in five counties demonstrates that most county officials focus almost exclusively on participation in planning and budgeting. Resident engagement in monitoring projects and providing feedback is negligible.

But in counties with institutionalised public participation frameworks, Makueni and Elgeyo Marakwet in particular, county officials have pioneered the constitution of project management committees in which diverse representatives from the community, chosen by citizens, play an active role in visiting and reviewing projects as they are being implemented and providing feedback to both county officials and fellow county residents. This can help to provide timely feedback on issues to county officials, and entrench ownership and project maintenance among community members.

Evidence of success, sharing best practices, particularly in cross county convenings, and media engagement can help to spread these success and entrench these institutions in a wider range of counties thus broadening and deepening citizen participation. We will again try to retrace the pathway by which county innovations have influenced nation-wide change, engage coordinating institutions and leverage OGP Local.

Statutory village meeting(s) (Tanzania, Uganda)

In Tanzania, at village level, the Local Government Act requires quarterly meetings in every village and street in the country at which citizen feedback is solicited especially on current community challenges, and village accounts are shared. In Uganda, there is only one annual statutory village level meeting for planning and budgeting.

Our own research in both countries shows the limitations of these meetings which are the primary and most proximate mode of government-citizen interaction and engagement. Village meetings:

- Are not consistently held across all villages
- Do not share budget and expenditure reports
- Have low levels of attendance
- Do not contain provisions to share feedback to allow for continuous engagements

In addition, citizens complain that meetings a) are designed to transmit or impose information to communities rather than seek their input, b) primarily used as a means to extract contributions and, c) make no deliberate effort to capture the contributions of women and young people.

In Uganda, the Local Government Development Guidelines 2014 provide for planning meetings to collect citizens' views in the planning and budgeting processes but have not been complied with. Citizen views are not integrated in the prioritisation of projects and initiatives. In addition, there are insufficient

attempts to engage CBO representatives, private sector organisations or interest groups in development initiatives.

At the parish level, the Parish Development Committees that have just been revitalised should facilitate annual development planning processes and ensure the convening of the annual parish planning fora envisioned in the 2014 guidelines. The parish development plan is designed to pull together all sectors and development programs and also serves as a coordinating mechanism. The roll out of this relatively new attempt to re-energise local participation provides an important opportunity to: embed the lessons and approaches from our interventions into the local government system; use our evidence to monitor the success of the Parish Development Model; and provide ideas and areas for improvement. Some of these insights include: the importance of convening more village meetings beyond the annual statutory meeting, the value of Local Council Chairs - Level I attending village meetings, the value of soliciting feedback from communities in these meetings; the role of convening more general village meetings in improving the statutory annual meeting, and the power of inclusion and collective problem-solving.

Currently, the central government plays a suffocating role, imposing its priorities on municipalities around the country. Local governments are unable to raise local funds and so are dependent on conditional or project funding from central government. There is little space for local government to incorporate local realities into their mandate.

Contrastingly, in Tanzania, the regulatory environment on paper mandates extensive public participation. Statutory village and council meetings are supposed to be held once per quarter and provide space for communities to raise current problems. The sharing of budgets and expenditure is also required. Rhetoric around planning and budgeting is constantly emphatic of the need for citizen participation. Although the process to enact a national policy on devolution has stalled, there is a strong and comprehensive institutional framework to support citizen participation. In practice, the story is different with dysfunctionality and exclusion the norm. However, the narrative and rhetoric alongside the codification of these processes into law provides important ammunition for advocacy to improve these spaces; the work is to support government to achieve their own aims better.

In both countries, although local government officials are well versed in rhetoric around the importance of public participation, although there are a number of statutory requirements for the same and despite a participatory approach to planning and budgeting that is also codified in law, the system does not function as described and is largely ineffective. Citizens question the efficiency, legitimacy and effectiveness of community meetings and the voices of women and young people continue to be largely excluded.

Through our animation work, we have shown how these spaces can be transformed and reclaim their place as a critical vehicle for development and good governance. Despite their localized nature, these are centrally coordinated spaces and so there is a means to influence them at scale through infusing insights from the local collaboration work in the ministry of local government. At the same time, we can connect these meetings, especially through the budgeting and planning process, all the way to national decision-making especially in terms of resource allocation. They offer a potent space and opportunity for impact at scale. Beyond engaging with national institutions to transform these spaces, we will also seek direct influence as articulated in other missions.

Annex 2 – Missions in detail

Mission 1: Demonstrating agency and responsiveness to build trust and collaboration

In a selection of communities (in up to seven districts¹ each in Uganda and Tanzania, ideally in one village in every ward in the district), Twaweza will work with partners and in communities directly to identify local change agents - one male and one female; these individuals will be intensively trained and continuously mentored in the participatory action research approach to surface community challenges. These challenges are then filtered and prioritised, and action plans to address a selection of them are co-created between change agents, community members and local leaders. Community members to support change agents are elected to a committee and the action plans, which include responsibilities on the part of both citizens and government officials, are implemented with close follow up from animators and committees and constant feedback to the wider community.

In Kenya, we will explore the feasibility of implementing this approach, in fewer counties given the difference in governance structures and broader context. We aim to focus on under-served counties. We will also work actively in the Open Government Partnership (OGP) Local counties as an alternative approach to collaborative local governance and actively encourage and support new entrants to OGP Local. We will explore cross-pollinating best practice between this approach and our own participatory action research (animation) intervention.

Central to this approach is the role of the change agent as a facilitator, a catalyst to enable community members to define and address priority problems through increasing public participation in deliberation and decision-making. A key aspect of these discussions will be to problematise well – looking beyond the surface of problems to identify underlying causes and structural or systemic aspects of these problems. The emphasis will also be on including under-represented groups and voices, including a focus on young women.

We see this as a value on its own: supporting citizens, especially historically excluded groups, to address problems and issues important to their lives in hyper local ways with proximate impact. However, the wider impact from this work is generated through the momentum Twaweza will bring, through our work to influence government institutions, in leveraging such instances of successful local collective action into advocacy for wider changes to the means by which local governments engage citizens.

Priority areas will be selected collectively by the community for them to address in conjunction with their leaders. The committee plays a critical role in ensuring these priorities and action items are implemented. Follow up can involve the community's own actions, contributing work, money or ideas, and engaging with alternative actors such as religious organisations or the private sector. It may also entail working with local leadership or escalating the problems to higher relevant levels of government.

The local change agents and any other representatives or interlocutors selected by the community, with support from partners, will take on directly engaging with sub-national authorities including attending

¹ Currently, over the 2019-2023 strategy we have been working in five districts in Tanzania and five in Uganda. We intend to continue working in these districts, albeit with a tapering approach and to add two new districts in each country over this strategic period.

relevant government meetings as observers or participants, making information requests and functioning as conduits between citizens and local government.

In this work, communities are drivers of their own destinies; where necessary (e.g. in situations of dysfunctional/absent local governments), their pathways to address their problems may circumvent government. While we will not push for any specific routes for citizens to address their problems, our preference is towards the revitalisation of local governance processes and institutions, decentralised and democratic in principle, but exclusive and dysfunctional in practice.

It has been an important part of ensuring buy-in from community members that priorities could come from any sector. Citizens in one community may choose to focus on reforming the management of their water supplies, or raising funds to extend supplies to new areas. Those in another may prefer to focus on health facilities – on ensuring that health workers are present and treat patients with respect, or that facilities are kept clean and key medical supplies are available. And a third area may mobilise through their elected representatives and the media to put pressure on the district or even national government to improve school infrastructure. Our work aims at enhancing their ability, willingness and opportunities to organise collectively in solving the problems they prioritise and to expand the impact of those efforts through engaging the government to transform statutory spaces for citizen participation.

Local authorities have reasonable incentives to engage positively. They are driven by pressure from citizens, to whom they are proximate; and they are driven by pressure from above as they are responsible for the delivery of many government interventions and are often painted as sources of leakage and under-delivery by the central government. In addition, like all such groups, they are not homogenous. Although there are many instances of corruption, mismanagement and abuse of power among local authorities, this is in part driven by the lack of accountability mechanisms, particularly citizen monitoring and investigative media. We have seen that the nudge of knowing someone is watching, following up, asking questions will push many into, at least, more ethical conduct. Over time, if responsiveness and engagement unblock development projects in their areas and inculcate a more positive relationship with citizens, their motivation can only intensify. We have seen ample evidence of the power of this approach – hostile and negative local officials become champions and advocates of the work.

In this strategy, we will be more deliberate about sharing details of the intervention with communities and leaders, in particular the success stories, to spread awareness of and support for the change agents and their work. This will help to inculcate more of a sense of expectation among the wider community and contribute to the potential for more lasting effects – as communities are more broadly conscientised a momentum for progress will be created that can become part of community norms rather than dependent on the work of specific people. At the same time, we acknowledge there is a temporal nature to the trust and collaboration we seek to promote, such that it can always be seen as a work in progress. We work to support and grow a wide array of actors, inside and outside government, who are motivated to defend the space for joint problem-solving.

Twaweza and partners will work on the national engagement component of this work: infusing the lessons from this work into government organised public consultations and spaces for participation. We will also actively explore the registration and structures for a national association of change agents. We will emphasise convening and exchange to try to create links between the change agents.

And we will advocate actively to other CSOs to adopt the approach (animation) as a means to spreading practice and the positive outcomes, and building greater legitimacy and relevance in the sector. In select cases, we may directly support this implementation in other communities or specialised groups including paralegals, human rights monitors or members of community violence prevention committees. And complementary local and national media coverage will provide supportive narratives and contribute to an enabling environment to encourage change agents, committee members and local leaders.

Key components

Partners

There are a number of existing well-grounded organisations that do deep and effective work in communities, and we partner with one of them in each district where we work to support and amplify their work, and bring our national level engagement skills to bear. Given the requirement of financial commitment to these partnerships, partners need to be registered organisations with sufficient financial management capacity. Working with grounded partners, we also learn more about the contexts in which we are undertaking this work and how it is done in practice. The collaborative approach of partnerships with the possibility for all partners to learn and grow is preferred, although we anticipate different types of partnership models that evolve along with the work. Documenting and learning from these models is a core component of this work and our own learning curve. In two districts so far, we have been able to partner directly with animators' networks to implement this work. Although they have significantly more capacity gaps, particularly in financial management, we are convinced that in the long run, these local district level networks can contribute to amplifying and spreading the effects of the approach and the creation of a national association and so, are worth supporting.

In our experience so far, we have observed a number of issues to address in navigating these complex relationships. We seek to co-create aspects of the work with our partners to benefit from their contextual knowledge and their experience. However, feedback tends to be focused on the financial resourcing around which there is a little less flexibility. Partners tend to default into an implementing agency posture and while we are aware of the power dynamic and make efforts to mitigate it, it is easy for small triggers to affect the careful balance. We have also observed partners influencing action plans to choose solvable problems so as to be able to report success to us, and we have seen village governments exert undue influence on the partners and animators, and consequently the action plans, to serve their own ends. All of this asks us to continue to focus on the form and mode of these relationships even as we are bound up in the work itself.

Criteria for selecting partners

- Working towards building networks, identifiable / self-identifying groups
- Grounded in specific communities
- Working with local change agents
- Commitment to iteration, learning
- Commitment to social justice and progressive values
- Working relationships with local government

Geographies

Locations are selected carefully as the aim is to spend extended periods of time (between three and five years) in the selected communities. The presence of reform-minded authorities is an important aspect of the choice of geographies. We understand that there are communities and local authorities that are

already working collectively to solve their systemic problems, and conversely that there are communities and local authorities that can be viewed as completely incapable of collective action. Given the duration of our strategy and our desire to demonstrate effectiveness of our interventions, we select locations that fall somewhere in the failure/success continuum. To ensure application of our interventions and outcomes in different contexts, we ensure geographic diversity and provide detailed contextual narratives of the places in which we work. The presence of potential champions will be an important part of the early uptake of this area of work, supporting local clearances and integration into local processes. Over time, we hope for these champions themselves to support the spread of the ideas and methods, and for neighbouring local authorities and communities to express interest as well.

Criteria for selecting geographies

- Presence of (potential) local government champions, interested in change, responsiveness
- Partners' geographic focus
- Regional, socio-cultural representation / variation
- Presence of local change agents, existing networks and groups
- Geographical spread across the country
- Proximity to centre(s) of power

Good problematising

Although people are well aware of the challenges that they live every day, there can be a tendency to see the superficial problems rather than examine deep-rooted underlying causes. A key feature of the initial community level engagements, therefore, is all about trying to identify systemic issues that contribute to or even cause the problems people face every day, while maintaining a manageable and realistic approach to what can be done. Problems may be addressed in steps, with easier (smaller) solutions first, but it's the deeper understanding of the causes of a problem that is essential to begin to devise more longer-term solutions. The animators are critical in ensuring this is done well and are provided with tools to probe community members during discussions.

However, we have observed some challenges in the deeper structural analysis and are exploring how animators can be provided with closer support, with on-the-spot troubleshooting during the initial stages of the participatory research in their communities. This is a cornerstone of this intervention: understanding their everyday problems differently is a critical part of the conscientisation of community members, structural analysis leads to more sustainable and equitable solutions, and the quality of analysis and the consequent creativity of solutions, is a means by which to demonstrate the value of citizen participation to local leaders. Despite these challenges, we also are seeing improvement over time: in some districts, communities initially choose to address tangible and simpler problems but then begin to diagnose more complex problems structurally and propose more dynamic and innovative solutions.

Local change agents

Training and engaging constantly with civic-minded people based in their own communities who can act as change agents is a core piece of this work. They are selected carefully, they must have some level of legitimacy and acceptance among community members while being able to navigate the tension inherent in their roles in galvanising collective action.

These local change agents are identified through community nomination during a public meeting. Ideally they are:

- Young, trainable (Young change agents are often charismatic, easy to train and quick to get to grips with and run the intervention. At the same time, they quickly get bored and move on because results take long to be realised. On the other hand, older change agents are more patient, they engage better and often stay the course. Therefore, we broadly seek to balance between ages for change agents)
- Literate/numerate at a basic level
- Able to speak up in meetings
- Respected and trusted by the community
- Likely to stay in the community for at least a year

These change agents will act as community champions, keeping issues alive and encouraging others to participate in problem-solving; they will escalate issues (alongside the selected follow up groups) to relevant levels of local government; and they will serve as conduits for information back to other community members. Where relevant they will help to bring in other civil society actors including NGOs, the private sector and religious organisations. Keeping them motivated, inspired and networked will be crucial.

They need to be able to learn from each other, share experiences and encourage each other not to lose hope or give up so convening and exchange will need to be a significant part of our work. Ultimately, we also hope for convening to contribute to the spread of the approach. We will assess the effect of this work on the animators themselves as part of our monitoring efforts with a focus on their network-building skills and contributions to spreading the approach.

We do observe a tension in terms of the role of the change agents. Over time, we see some tendencies towards elitism among change agents. By the nature of our investment in them, we are differentiating them from other community members. We are building them as individuals who then become even more critical to the intervention by virtue of their new skills and capacities. For example, after recognising that change agents needed to understand government processes and standards to enable them to craft appropriate requests and address the relevant authorities, we introduced this as an additional training. We are also introducing a session on change agents and law following an incident of mob violence in Kamuli. But this threatens the possibility of sustainability and spread. If we need more specialised and skilled facilitators, we will be unable to encourage the adoption of our approach and we deviate from value of putting citizens at the centre. Yet we have seen that investing in motivated individuals can genuinely be transformational – there could even be a case for providing selected local change agents with scholarships to pursue tertiary training and education. We will need to explore the most effective means to balance these competing issues.

Citizen committees

The local change agents are carefully selected for their skills and potential in galvanising community action. Nonetheless, it is important for the legitimacy of these processes for the community, if community members are able to nominate other intermediaries and representatives to be part of any follow up and decision-making processes. This is the role of the citizen follow up committees. In some ways they mediate the challenge of elitism referenced above, and over time, their importance in the intervention has grown. They provide louder and more numerous voices to follow up by change agents, they tend to be selected directly from the community and can be rotated over time meaning the community will have more motivated individuals to follow up on their issues even beyond the intervention timelines. They have also been useful stand ins when for various reasons the original

change agents drop out. In Uganda, since the Local Council Chair is part of the citizen follow up committee, this increased exposure to the process will enable them to be better ambassadors.

We have already adapted their role in line with these insights: two committee members per village now participate in all reflective sessions and refresher trainings and we are increasingly emphasising their importance in engagements around the intervention.

In this 2024-27 strategy, we will reflect on their roles and ensure we incorporate them into more parts of the intervention cycle. We will also explore opportunities to regularly refresh membership of these committees to contribute to building bigger groups of motivated and active community members. We will also explore possibilities of greater integration into the government-initiated systems of citizen monitoring committees (in all three countries) as a means to secure more buy in from relevant ministries and agencies nationally and to support sustainability.

Inclusion

A central tenet of the approach is a focus on creating space for often excluded or ignored voices, particularly young women. Young people and women in particular are often left out of local power structures and decision-making. Although this work does not over-turn decades of imbalances, it can contribute to challenging stereotypes and creating additional space for women and young people's voices.

We have noted challenges in this area; women and young people still tend to err on the side of silence and non-participation, with young women most affected. This has led us to have to make uncomfortable compromises whereby young women channel their concerns directly to animators who represent them in community meetings. In addition, the change agents and committee members are products of the same patriarchal norms and customs and so are sometimes guilty of upholding these values. We will continue to explore the means to address this broader issue.

Convening

Over the course of our 2019-23 strategy, we saw first-hand the value of convening change agents within districts, across districts, and nationally as well as through exchanges. Change agents are inspired by each other, they learn new skills and strategies and grapple with challenges together. Being part of something bigger and knowing you are not alone and isolated are critical drivers for their motivation.

National convenings in particular are key to the idea of movement building. By also involving animators not directly related to Twaweza, we are helping to facilitate more efficient spreading of the ideology and approach.

Animating others

There are particular groups in society who by virtue of their responsibilities can benefit from the values and ideas behind animation. We see value in infusing the values behind animation into different specialised groups in order to enhance their community engagement. In this way, more and different actors are helping to facilitate participation, agency and voice and again entrenching wider support for these ideas. This is critical to helping to shift deeply-entrenched norms around the role of government as parent, ultimate arbiter and decider. We will also deliberately propagate the approach among other civil society organisations to broaden its effects.

Mission 2: Generating evidence for better decisions and actions

We generate evidence to enhance insight, prompt debate and amplify voices for better decisions and actions

Twaweza will harness its rigorous approach to research and its creative communications capacity to further promote the value of evidence in decision-making. Our flagship program in this area continues to be Sauti za Wananchi which is an important nexus point for our emphasis on scientific research and our promotion of citizen-driven governance.

Twaweza will continue, in all three countries (when possible), to use Sauti za Wananchi as a platform to collect representative citizen views on democratic freedoms and how local government works, the issues unearthed through our work in communities including critical service delivery challenges and government mandated entitlements and standards as well as the Sustainable Development Goals.

Sauti za Wananchi provides an important entry point for government officials to appreciate the insight provided by citizen perspectives. Through renewed emphasis on data collection partnerships with government institutions, we will spread a wider narrative of the value of citizens' voices across a range of sectors and issues. In this way, we will be contributing to a governance environment which sees the benefits inherent in citizen engagement.

This is an important prong of our approach to generating wider impact: aside from direct painstaking engagement with specific government institutions to transform particular aspects of citizen-government interaction (see *Influencing Institutions*) based on our lessons, we will generate a more supportive atmosphere for this engagement through collecting and sharing citizen voices on a range of topics with influential government institutions. The idea is that this lays important foundations within government more broadly to support moves towards more frequent and open public consultations; a posture which has been made less likely by the extent of critical commentary on social media.

We will use Sauti za Wananchi to widely test problems that seem to recur across localities based on the action plans from intervention communities in Mission 1. For one to two problems of national relevance per year we will design a series of engagements to kick start the relevant government system to respond to these widespread challenges.

Sauti za Wananchi also provides an important resource for civil society organisations to design and monitor their programs and to engage in evidence-based advocacy. And Sauti za Wananchi provides a critical tool for journalists to include citizens in their coverage despite resource and editorial constraints.

Building on our learning so far, we will localise Sauti za Wananchi in three main ways:

1. A boosted national sample that includes greater scope for geographical and demographic (youth, gender, people with disabilities) disaggregation.
2. Collecting citizen-generated data face-to-face in the districts and regions in which we are working to showcase citizen agency and government responsiveness. The tools will be designed in close collaboration with local authorities to ensure we are speaking to their data needs.
3. Collecting perspectives from professional and other groups. There are many groups whose voices are missing from key debates affecting them. We can use our call centre model to poll

these groups building on previous experiences with journalists, women entrepreneurs in markets and artists.

In engaging relevant actors around these various voices we will focus on infusing them into media debate – sharing new data, new voices and new discussions. We will build on current work to ensure that all of these voices are shared with relevant government authorities, even those outside our core areas of interest and expertise. We will also identify partners with sectoral expertise to make use of the voices collected to directly influence policies, plans and budgets. And, critically we will infuse citizen voices into new and existing invited and created spaces for citizen-government interaction.

A note on Sauti za Wananchi Tanzania: Despite extensive engagement with relevant authorities, it has become increasingly clear that the current context is unlikely to allow us to reinstate Sauti za Wananchi, especially given upcoming elections. Therefore in Tanzania, particularly for the first two years of the strategy, we will continue to collect citizen voices to inform our work via the special panel methodology. We will also collect local data and the views and experiences of specific groups. And finally we will explore one new approach to amplifying voices, for example deliberative polling, or citizens' assemblies. In 2026, we will revive our traditional Sauti za Wananchi approach albeit with more intensive advance engagement with the government (in light of the success of this approach in Kenya and Uganda and feedback received from within the government in Tanzania).

Beyond Sauti za Wananchi, we will continue to place a premium on evidence generation. Given our thrust to more successfully and comprehensively integrate our work into government systems and processes, we will emphasise background research – to understand systems in theory and in practice to identify critical points for engagement and influence – and advance message testing – to understand what works in persuading our selected government actors to change their practices and behaviour. Therefore formative and exploratory research will play an even bigger role in our work in this strategy.

In addition, we are working in new spaces and capitalising on cutting-edge thinking in the sector. Therefore we will need to design a careful program of hypothesis testing research to understand what bears out and what does not in terms of practical experience in changing government. To enhance our knowledge and complement this work, we will undertake a range of case studies to understand approaches that seem to be working well and see what we can take from them into our own interventions and government engagement. Where relevant we will also engage in solutions testing, exploring how to act on key levers in terms of the institutions and spaces we are trying to transform.

We are committed to publishing and disseminating all our research so as to contribute to local and global knowledge on what works in entrenching democratic practice, including through our international board memberships. In addition, we are a player in the global push to recognise or legitimise citizen-generated data which is fast gaining traction. We have the unique value of having engaged extensively with bureaus of statistics on these issues including being part of the technical committee to draft guidelines for government use of citizen generated data in Kenya, and having been part of driving the global agenda.

Key components

Sauti za Wananchi

Sauti za Wananchi, our public opinion survey platform, is unique: it is still East Africa's first (and up to now only) frequent, rigorous and unbiased citizen polling mechanism. We began it in Tanzania in 2013,

expanded to Kenya in 2016 and to Uganda in 2017. In all three countries it has managed to carve out a significant space in public and policy debate. We have media monitoring data that attests to its influence on broadcast and print media, data from independent national surveys confirming its growing recognition and recall among the general public, and repeated interviews with high-level individuals across a range of domains (political, media, civil society, government, academia) attesting to its influence on public debate as well as policy deliberations. This influence happens not only because of how the data is collected, but also in how it is packaged and communicated – we have honed a powerful communications machinery which includes launches, media briefings, and targeted disseminations as well as the regular insertion of voice data into interactions between government and citizens, in person or via media.

In the new strategy Sauti za Wananchi will continue to be used as an effective means to infuse citizens voice and opinions experience into national debates, as these views continue to be largely missing from public as well as policy deliberations. Our experience shows us that the more ‘sanitised’ approach to public consultation represented by Sauti za Wananchi is a safe entry point for skittish officials alarmed by the threat of opening the door to citizen voice.

The Sauti za Wananchi briefs that were related to pressing issues of the moment have generated most attention and debate. In the new strategy we will refine our methods in terms of timing and responsiveness so we best gain from this effect, feeding into government processes and cycles as well as capturing the buzz around hot topics. An important additional component to this work is to more intentionally and widely share successful examples of government incorporating citizen input as a means of building trust and credibility with government for acknowledging their responsiveness, and to contribute to a more widely supportive environment for the value of citizens’ perspectives.

With our new focus on local government issues, we can equally make use of Sauti za Wananchi to monitor changes in this space, alongside our traditional applications in program design and message development.

Sauti za Wananchi additionally provides an important alternative to social media as a national barometer. Inclusive by nature, Sauti za Wananchi provides access to the often unheard rural majorities and women, who are much less likely than men to participate in public debates whether through village meetings, traditional or social media or even by direct petitions to leaders.

Engagement around Sauti za Wananchi data will:

- Channel representative citizen perceptions directly to relevant authorities at national and sub-national levels
- Prompt policy or practice responses to data including through information sharing
- Generate appreciation for the value of citizen voices as an input to their work in government institutions particularly in the ministry of local government, among MPs and the parliamentary secretariat
- Generate media coverage of citizens’ views on policy reforms, democratic values and experiences of service delivery with a focus on government mandated standards and entitlements
- Feed into the work of other, particularly women’s rights, organisations involved in policy engagement and advocacy, including in areas in which Twaweza has more limited sectoral knowledge and influence

- Feed into national and international data collection efforts and engagement with the Sustainable Development Goals
- Unblock one to two specific problems per country, identified in a majority of Twaweza's intervention communities, validated through national research through engagement with and convening of multiple actors and evidence-based policy recommendations

Our previous strategy enabled us to understand the value of more localised panels for data collection. However, our learning so far suggests that for value-for-money and strategic reasons, we are better served by integrating any boosted local samples into the main panel so that we can continue to collect sub-national data more cost-effectively. In addition, the lower volume of call rounds per year causes respondents to become disengaged so we will need to actively ensure that there are sufficient rounds conducted through partnerships. Spreading the insight from and value of citizen voices will again boost broader value, especially in local government, of how important these perspectives are.

Local data for delivery

In a selection of the districts in which Twaweza is working directly with communities, and in which there are reform-oriented local authorities, we will be conducting extensive data collection – baseline, midline, endline. We will use this opportunity to collect data representative to the regional level, as a means to offer some value to regional authorities, as well as the district level. Although this is primarily evaluation data, we will use the opportunity to collect data relevant for local authorities also. In this way we are further propagating the value of citizens' views in decision-making and building alliances with local officials.

Special Groups

As part of our bid to more widely spread value for public consultation, we will continue, especially in Tanzania, to explore the collection of representative voices from special groups including potentially informal entrepreneurs, civil servants, civil society, animators and others. These polls can provide a range of value in sectoral advocacy, persuading government officials of the benefits of consultation and participation, and emphasising the importance of voice more generally.

Testing messages and assumptions

For the first time in our history, Twaweza is articulating pathways to change that rely almost entirely on our capacity to persuade and influence government. Even if we want to see effects among citizens, we are relying heavily on change to be initiated on the side of the government in order to make impact at scale. This means that we will need to hone our knowledge and test our tools for influence carefully – what incentives can we really speak to among government officials and how? Do we know enough about how things work inside specific parts of government to provide guidance on what and how to make change? Are our ideas about what is probable or even possible correct? Similarly if we are evangelising around particular approaches and ideas, we need to be sure that they work and understand why.

Case studies and solutions

We are deeply aware that we do not hold a monopoly on successful approaches to transform local governance. Therefore we will continue to emphasise the identification and propagation of other successful models of citizen engagement. We can feed these lessons into our institutional engagement at national level and amplify their stories as part of spreading our values. We can also learn from these initiatives. In addition, we may also wish to investigate solutions directly through testing.

KiuFunza (Tanzania)

Having unequivocally demonstrated the efficacy and value of teacher bonuses, we are focused on running a pilot with government co-operation and spreading the values and ideals, and systems and processes behind the intervention both sub-nationally through Regional Commissioners, and nationally through the ministries of education and local government. We will be transitioning KiuFunza into its own separate entity in 2026.

Mission 3: Strengthening civil society to enhance legitimacy and impact

Globally, Twaweza will continue to play an active role in advocacy around fair, long-term and flexible resourcing and trust-based philanthropy. We will tell our own story with a focus on the important outcomes we have been privileged to achieve due to our donor policy and funding model. We will continue to work with like-minded organisations to spread the message to a wider audience of funder partners.

We will also seek opportunities to contribute to efforts to promote a more positive narrative around civil society by sharing our successes and lessons in the wider transparency, accountability, participation global community. And our memberships of boards such as the Open Contracting Partnership, the Open Government Partnership and the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data enable us to amplify our insights and experiences from communities across East Africa to shape the global agenda.

In Tanzania, Twaweza will maintain a focus on the operating environment for civil society organisations given that this directly affects our work, in recognition of our core strengths and identity, and given how volatile this space has been and continues to be in recent years.

We will build on our learning during the 2019-2023 strategy around working with the civil society sector. During this time, we honed our skills in growing small and/or unique organisations, exchanging skills and experiences with our peers, engaging in joint policy and legislative advocacy around the regulatory environment for the sector and promoting positive narratives about civil society work. These are the critical levers for intervention in strengthening the sector.

In working more deliberately with the sector, we seek strength in numbers. We have learned to our detriment the price of standing out alone. We also speak back to one of the original formative ideas behind Twaweza as a model NGO, set up in many ways to demonstrate the potential of the sector. Over time, we learned this is insufficient and leaves you open to being singled out by repressive regimes. And so we now seek to diffuse our skills and systems more deliberately among all the organisations with whom we partner alongside an array of sub-national and community organisations.

We will cultivate a small stable of diverse civil society partners who complement Twaweza's strengths and embrace democratic values. We will walk hand in hand with these organisations to support their growth and create a network of allies. We have sharpened our approach to this work over the past few years, our comprehensive programmatic and administrative due diligence tool surfaces areas for improvement and we design a customised program of support for these organisations.

We seek to connect them to other funders for their long-term sustainability. Our support in this area entails a limited annual financial contribution available for use in operational or programmatic costs alongside an intensive mentorship and coaching program to catalyse organisational growth and impact.

Most importantly we seek to learn with these partners about the effectiveness of their work and our support to them.

Strong capacity and innovative approaches are ineffective if the regulatory environment for civil society is restrictive and constrains operations. We will use our well-honed capacity for empathetic and effective engagement to engage in joint advocacy for the sector.

We will seek to widen the space for the full spectrum of civil society including political parties, religious entities, artists, media, NGOs, civic groups and associations, trade unions. In so doing we are also contributing broadly to a more permissive environment for activism and civil society, entrenching the legitimacy of contestation and demand for better. We will bring all our tactics to bear into these attempts to promote more open and responsiveness civil society regulation including events, direct engagement and partnerships, media, and coalitions.

In Kenya and Uganda, due to our distinct positioning, reach and reputation in these environments, we will continue to engage extensively in joint convenings and advocacy, offer our data and research expertise as a resource and exchange capacities, insights and experiences with our peer CSOs.

And finally, the narratives and rhetoric around civil society play a seminal role in shaping people's perceptions of the sector both within governments and communities. These narratives create barriers or space around what we do and how and why we do it. Our extensive media engagement around the first two mission areas and as part of our work to transform national institutions in all three countries will surface and share positive examples of civil society work as well as the underlying values thus helping to generate new norms around civic engagement and the place of the sector in society.

Key components

Legislative Analysis and Advocacy

Thus far, our legislative advocacy has been concentrated in Tanzania (although it is a space we may venture into with the Centre for Policy Analysis in Uganda). We have largely been reactive – engaging in advocacy in response to government proposals for legal amendments. However we will now move into more proactive and focused work in this area, aiming to initiate processes to review laws that address local government and representation as well as the broader civil society regulatory environment.

Historically, we have been weaker in mapping MPs and their interests and incentives and also less compelling to influential ruling party MPs. Our agendas and actions have aligned more easily with opposition interests and we have not exerted sufficient energy in case-making to ruling party MPs. We have also been weak in follow up analysis: reviewing final enacted laws to compare to our proposals and understand our effects, as well as exploring the space for ongoing action.

We will continue to operate on the principle that legal changes often happen in darkness and so accompany comprehensive collaborative analysis processes with strong public engagement. This also serves as a means to raise public awareness and exert pressure on MPs.

We are also focused on expanding our engagement to cover the legislative process more comprehensively, moving away from last minute engagements during public hearings with parliamentary committees to approach custodian ministries and building relationships with their officials as well as technocrats in the process.

Partnerships and Coalitions

Twaweza recognises the contribution of a myriad of players and actors in achieving our strategic outcomes. We are also convinced that we should not reinvent the wheel, if an organisation is already successfully conducting an activity or intervention, it serves all of our aims to collaborate with them rather than try to repeat or recreate their work. And finally we are driven by the certainty that collaboration makes us stronger – more resilient and more effective. Thus partnerships are integral to our work.

Our approach to partnerships has evolved over time, reflecting our learning and experience. Currently we conceive of three distinct types of partnerships and our engagements with them are guided by our partnerships policy.

Instrumental – these are partnerships specifically designed to accomplish set tasks and contribute to one or more of our institutional outcomes.

Purposive – these are partnerships often with multiple organisations - coalitions - around a shared agenda.

Strategic – these are organisations which have a deep resonance with Twaweza’s vision and values, and we see their growth as an end in itself, alongside the contribution to our outcomes.

Strategic partnerships are our primary vehicle for building like-minded highly competent organisations across the spectrum of civil society as model for the sector and to enhance our collective impact. Our engagement with them is comprehensive involving units from across the organisation and we anticipate no more than three to five a year.

The process involves a comprehensive assessment of their capacities and the design of a customised program of support from departments across the organisation alongside a modest financial contribution over one or two years. After this period, we aim to continue to collaborate with these organisations albeit in a different form. We have previously worked in this way with JamiiForums and Equality for Growth.

We will give special consideration to government institutions that demonstrate interest in this type of collaboration although the form and process for these will necessarily be determined on a case by case basis.

Purposive partnerships or coalitions, networks or movements are particularly critical to our advocacy for the regulatory environment for civil society.

We are driven by the need to coordinate increasingly scarce resources and avoid duplication of work, the strong realisation that we are better together and the strength and inspiration that comes from solidarity. Specifically, working with other organisations can help to:

- Strengthen your case with a diversity and multitude of voices and views
- Reduce the risk of being individually targeted for activism
- Pool resources and talents for greater impact
- Avoid duplication
- Improve content and work with more ideas and perspectives

- Complement your own strengths with those from other entities and fill any gaps or weaknesses you may have

Traditional and formal entities like Twaweza lend themselves more naturally to structured coalitions between civic organisations. However we are open and welcoming to embracing new ways of coming together particularly movements and issue-specific networks that leverage each member's value-addition.

Moving forward in Tanzania we will be actively seeking to engage with the National Council of NGOs (NACONGO) as the government-endorsed vehicle for NGO advocacy round the regulatory environment. We do so with recognition of the structural and integrity weaknesses that have plagued NACONGO historically.

In this work, broadly we will be making use of similar tactics and activities as described in our work to make the case to the institutions responsible for coordinating and overseeing the work of local governments including direct engagement, cultivating insider allies and external pressure and demand.

When convening groups on issues arising through our own work, we aim for broad-based coalitions and are focused on engaging unusual actors including former civil servants, religious leaders, the private sector, artists and others. We look for technical capacity and knowledge that we do not have internally. We are deliberate about infusing partnerships and coalitions with joint opportunities for learning. We ensure that these engagements are characterised by respect, openness and trust on all sides.

Influencing institutions to embody accountability and inclusion

Key Components

Our Tactics

The major ways in which we influence government are:

1. Participation in field work – this can provide an emotional connection with the issue(s)
2. Closed door meetings – to offer officials time and space to engage with what we are sharing rather than having to formulate a more public response. This positions us as an ally and collaborator.
3. Co-creation – this applies especially to research and data collection. Approaching relevant officials at the concept stage can help build ownership of the findings and ensure you are speaking directly to their knowledge gaps and needs.
4. Events – these are naturally more public spaces but provide a useful 'fuller' picture of an issue by convening diverse stakeholders. We aim to share content with the relevant government institution in advance so they do not feel ambushed
5. Convenings – active participation in government convenings to demonstrate that we are a team player and to inspire particularly large groups of local government officials in particular with new ideas and approaches. We have seen the effectiveness of this approach through our long-term engagement with government communications officers in Tanzania which resulted in our data and ideas being incorporated in their strategy.
6. Learning exchanges – in particular between local authorities in which there are and are not change agents or animators as a means to spreading the approach.

7. Trainings – in select instances we will convene critical groups for direct knowledge exchange. An example would be the facilitators for the revised Obstacles and Opportunities for Development process.

We will also work with external actors including media and MPs to increase the calls for improvements and feedback to the ministry, and with other civil society to engage in collective advocacy and influencing.

We make careful use of outcome mapping to understand and track our achievements. Policy reform processes take time and extended effort and outcome mapping can help us to understand if we are on the right track or not.

Policy Analysis and Advocacy

We choose moments to engage in these processes judiciously, mindful that our influence is necessarily limited, at best. Political imperatives and contextual dynamics will always outweigh the incentives we are able to speak to. At the same time, careful analysis and research can surface attainable goals that have the means to bring significant and lasting change. We will be particularly focused on processes around the National Decentralisation Policy in Tanzania and the issuing of directives or circulars around local public engagement more generally in all three countries.

For one or two problems per year per country identified in a significant proportion of communities in which we are implementing animation and validated as deeper national challenges through Sauti za Wananchi, we will work to convene a range of decision-makers to develop a way forward.

In deciding to participate when we are invited by government, we use the following criteria:

- Is the policy directly relevant to any of the spaces we are trying to reinvigorate?
- Does the process feel meaningful and substantive or tokenistic? How genuine are the consultations – is there space to change the policy?
- Does Twaweza have unique insight from our data or community work to contribute?

In deciding how to frame and shape our contributions, we are guided by our values and outcomes. We consider the following:

- How can we facilitate affected groups, especially those that often do not have a seat at the table to participate in these processes?
- Can we draw on experiences from other countries in East Africa and beyond to frame our input?
- Can we mobilise a wider coalition for wider impact?
- How can we infuse our and other evidence into the conversation?
- Can we influence the form, shape and tone of the process?

Our activities and approaches for this type of policy advocacy are informed by a reverse logic process.

One exception to the details outlined above is around KiuFunza. In this case we have a specific, well-evidenced and tested proposal for improving learning outcomes and we are trying to proactively encourage national and sub-national adoption. Refer to the KiuFunza communications strategy.

Budget Analysis and Advocacy

At community and district levels, we have seen budget proposals as part of the outcomes of the animation work, especially in Uganda. And we envision this as part of the process: at some point the

problems that need to be solved will require increased financial resources from district allocations and beyond. However our primary interest is in influencing participatory hyper-local planning processes – to infuse them with the principles and lessons from the animation work – and to understand and explore unblocking the means by which community priorities are absorbed into the final budget presented by the ministry of finance. This is a new area of work for us and one that we will approach with curiosity and humility.

Media Engagement

Media continues to be a critical means to reach and influence people and to meet our strategic objectives. In 2020, 41% of Tanzanians cited TV and 56% named radio as their main source of information, while in Uganda 60% name radio and 17% use TV.

We see generating media coverage of our issues and evidence as an end in itself: through the media we are able to offer new approaches to old problems, new evidence on what is really going on and to reframe and reshape contemporary debates. We can reach many different target audiences at once and we can give wings to our agendas. Strong media presence also contributes to the brand that Twaweza has built over the years for credibility, reliability, innovation and evidence. But media also have an important role to play in the specific strands of work: working directly against laws and directives that threaten their independent operations, profiling positive examples and serving as a conduit for citizen voice.

We will work with the media in all three countries to spread value for citizen feedback and agency through amplifying their success stories, provide alternate means of citizen problem-solving and increase accountability pressure on government.

We engage the media through:

- Media partnerships - media partnerships offer a macro-level way to ensure that our content is constantly reverberating in the public and policy domains. We work with between three and five media partners in each country. We will work with these media outlets to push out a variety of content to reach our goals but also to agree on and promote shared values.
- Events - events provide a short and sharp way to directly reach media with new evidence or data, ideas and stories. Twaweza is committed to sharing the majority of our work with the media through events. We also engage media owners and editors in high level conversations about civic space.
- Talk shows and interviews - because Twaweza produces fresh content regularly, we are a prime candidate for talk shows on radio and television. These slots give us ample time to convey new data and ideas thoroughly and to a diverse audience. They also position us as a key commentator on important public issues and allow us to develop close connections with individual high-profile journalists. By also supporting the development of these programs even when we are not directly participating, we build allies among media personnel and become a first point of call, this in turn builds trust and allows us to draw journalists into our work.
- Electronic releases - given the breadth of data we have collected over the years, we often find ourselves with the capacity to provide citizens' perspectives on current debates. Thus we will regularly promote data points to media electronically that resonate with the national conversation leading to increased coverage of new perspectives and issues. Using the data also helps to demonstrate directly to media that data and evidence can provide an important line of

defence for content and can allow us to speak the unspeakable in a time when media content is increasingly under-scrutiny.

- Opinion pieces - although newspapers have limited circulation, they are read by almost all government officials. Editorial articles offer us the opportunity to share un-doctored commentary with an important segment of our target audience.
- Local radio partnerships – in animation districts covered by Twaweza but also to promote other local accountability mechanisms, to promote the Fix My Community model to share localised and national data, to promote accountability content and programs
- Media programs – we conceptualise, produce (in partnership) and sometimes even purchase airtime for shows designed to meet our objectives.
- Small grants – we provide small grants for journalists to do fieldwork to amplify citizen voice and agency and to cover data including from Twaweza. This model has been remarkably successful in securing huge volumes of mission-orientated media content and building journalists appetite for the same.

Shaping narratives

Narrative influence is a relatively new and important area of our media work. In essence we are looking to shape how people view issues at the level of the unconscious. What types of images and questions arise when we talk about certain issues? What are people's emotional responses to these and how can we act on them? The media is a natural space in which social norms are shaped and in which we can re-define models of interacting.

Social Media Engagement

Despite the growth in internet-enabled mobile phones, access to the internet remains low across East Africa. Those who are connected are by and large **urban, educated, middle class**.

It is also worth noting that social media is primarily used for entertainment and gossip and there are low levels of trust in social media content and, by and large, ambivalent attitudes about social media in the region.

However, social media also can have reach beyond these numbers. In Tanzania in particular, influential whistleblowers at various times have managed to achieve apparent national reach with older, rural audiences just as well-informed about every new post and leak.

We should always be seeking to understand how we use our social media spaces to reach new audiences. And beyond sharing content and hosting discussions, how can we use social media to achieve our strategic goals and outcomes.

Our general objectives for our social media work are:

- Brand, credibility, trust
- Sharing knowledge and evidence
- Amplifying success – spreading ideas and inspiration
- Connecting government and citizens
- Public pressure for accountability and responsiveness from government
- Building communities and networks

We try to avoid merely using social media as a promotional platform when its potential utility in our work is much greater. Social media has successfully been used as a campaigning and organising tool and we are increasingly looking to integrate it better into achieving our outcomes, while continuing to recognise its limitations. We will explore collecting views online, connecting elected representatives to their constituents, livestreaming key events including council meetings, and as a replacement for physical meetings in urban areas where they are extremely poorly attended.

Annex 3 - Our Learning Strategy

Learning has been and remains central to Twaweza's way of being: understanding and analysing the contexts in which we work, critical questioning of the effectiveness of initiatives we try out, learning from others in the governance fields and contributing to a collective body of knowledge. Learning becomes even more important as the context we operate under is constantly changing and increasingly becoming complex and uncertain. What works well in one context and moment is not necessarily going to work well in another.

Twaweza remains equally committed to learning as it is to its programs making a meaningful and measurable difference. Our learning strategy seeks to cultivate a culture of critical enquiry, reflection and adaptation within the organisation – to ask what works? Why, and how? How do we know? How can we make it better? Twaweza intends to stay ahead of the curve as a thoughtful, learning-oriented organisation, and one which collaborates actively with other entities to both enrich our own work, and contribute learning to the global governance field. This shared aspect of learning, learning together, is increasingly important to our approach and posture.

Here are the six core components which comprise our Learning Strategy, with the primary focus on improving practice.

1. Set clear, inspiring and challenging goals. These focus the organisation, allow us to develop longer-term vision of success (as well as deviation from this). When defined as two- or four-year hypotheses central to our theory of change, they are the “big bets” Twaweza is taking on in this period, and are the backbone of our evaluation strategy. They also serve as anchors for proximal metrics of successful implementation which we can describe and measure. We develop key indicators based on these metrics of success and hold ourselves accountable to report against these.

2. Be clear on the compass we are using - i.e. the organisational values that allow us to set and adjust the direction of travel and infuse our learning, monitoring and evaluation work: we aim for it to be collaborative (within the organisation, with local and international research partners), transparent (openly sharing our research questions, designs, tools and results - both positive and negative), imaginative (trying new approaches, methods), strategic (aligned well with the core mission of the organisation), rigorous (holding ourselves to high standards) and inclusive (valuing diverse experiences and perspectives).

3. Know the starting point, understand its complexities. In other words, undertake a solid baseline analysis of the status of key goals we wish to contribute to, outcomes we wish to achieve, as well as the relationships which govern how various actors behave in creating these outcomes and achieving the goals. For this, we use a process of Reverse Logic: an analytical approach (based on political economy analysis) through which we identify the main actors, their behaviours, and motivations and barriers to change. We build the key measurement components (monitoring) alongside this analysis.

4. Reflect, improve practice, adjust course as needed. The main function of monitoring and feedback is to describe and track implementation in a manner that is useful for adjusting work in real-time, as well as for reflecting at critical moments or junctures. We aim to strengthen the culture of using information for reflection throughout the organisation, at various levels and in different units. Some specific mechanisms for this in Twaweza are listed below. Importantly, it is only the activities and components in 4.2 that are mostly the domain of the Monitoring and Evaluation team; all others are infused throughout the organisation.

4.1. The Idea Memo / Decision Memo internal review process, whereby all implementation (“projects”) within the work plan must be presented for peer review, including details on desired

outcomes, implementation design, budget allocation, and monitoring and evaluation plans. This process allows for more quantifiable and specific targets to be articulated for each project while the long-term outcomes remain broader to allow for organisational agility and adaptive management.

4.2. Systematic collection of monitoring data as per our Monitoring Framework (which we will develop with reference to additional formative research conducted at the beginning of this strategic period), and a quicker turnaround of insights and results to implementers. Monitoring includes media coverage of advocacy efforts, and tailored monitoring around specific implementation pieces to answer the key questions of coverage (reach), quality, and feedback from end users. In many cases, we also measure the short-term effects of our initiatives (e.g. increasing knowledge or awareness of an issue). We use a toolbox of mixed methods, as relevant to the initiative, including Outcome Mapping, quantitative surveys, observation, in-depth interviews and group discussions, among others.

4.3. A mid-term review process for both programmatic direction (using monitoring data, insights and lessons as much as possible), as well as budget and expenditure information to make mid-year adaptations and course corrections.

4.4. Post-implementation reviews: an intense, peer reflection on what has worked and what hasn't in a particular initiative (or component of the initiative) and how these lessons inform further work.

5. Evaluation: taking the longer-term, bird's eye view. We have defined a limited number of "big bets" - that is, hypotheses stemming from the three main areas of our work (demonstrating citizen engagement locally, generating evidence and amplifying voice, strengthening civil society, and influencing institutions to embody inclusion and accountability). These are anchored by the baseline analyses, will span two or more years of implementation, and will use mixed methods to describe the trajectory of the implementation (what happened), capture the outcomes observed (results), and elucidate why the outcomes are (or are not) observed by situating the results in the context in which they occur. For details on the evaluation and research strategy, see Big Bets in the main strategy.

6. Partnering and collaborating for deeper learning, amplifying our own lessons, drawing on the experience of others. There are several components and layers to this.

6.1. The collaborating starts at home, within the organisation: we aim to strengthen the culture of reflection across units and work streams, valuing feedback and thoughtful adaptation. Some of the mechanisms for this are noted in point 4 above (e.g. Idea and Decision Memo review process, mid-term review, post-implementation reviews).

6.2. In the granular citizen agency work which we will undertake with partners we will hone our skills of adaptive management, actively learning from organisations and initiatives globally which have experimented with this approach already.

6.3. Particularly for evaluation work we will maintain and build on our current networks of researchers, and will seek to strengthen especially the links with East African researchers and institutions. While our mandate is not to build the capacity of local researchers, we will deliberately seek to partner international researchers we collaborate with local universities and think tanks for richer, more grounded research which is shaped primarily by questions around implementation and improving governance in the global south.

6.4. We value the opinion and critical feedback of key actors - and so will constitute an informal advisory group for our research and evaluation, to keep us on our toes about the overall direction of evaluation and research we undertake.

6.5. Strengthen global learning collaboration, particularly south-to-south learning, mentoring and exchange.

6.6. Meaningful contribution to global initiatives and processes which bridge governance and learning - such as the Open Government Partnership, the Open Contracting Partnership and the Global Partnership for Sustainable Data.

Annex 4 - What we achieved 2019-23

Citizens have the ability, willingness and opportunity to articulate their problems, come together to discuss them, express their views in the public sphere and take civic actions to address these challenges. They are acting, organising for change, and they use multiple strategies to do so. Twaweza is working through partners and directly to train, mentor, equip and inspire local change agents to address locally defined problems. Twaweza supports communities to problematise well and understand the structural causes behind the local challenges, and ultimately promote more inclusive and active local governance structures.

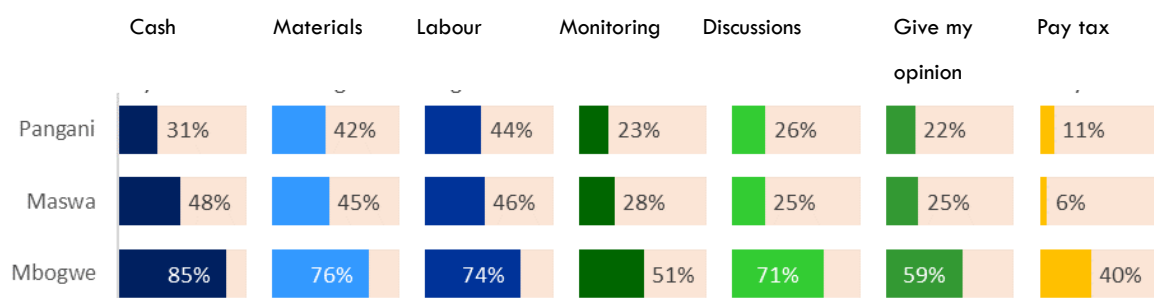
Over the 2019-223 strategy, we held close to 1,400 meetings in Uganda, attended by close to 40,000 people, more of whom were women (19,534 out of 38,142). As a result of these meetings 186 community challenges were identified and scheduled to be addressed in 64 action plans. In Tanzania, we held 303 meetings attended by over 55,000 people. In this case, more men attended (30,852 out of 56,467). Through these meetings, 212 priority actions were identified and communities planned for their resolution through 66 action plans. In Tanzania there are more statutory local government meetings and part of the effects of the animators' work is to ensure these are held quarterly as required, that income and expenditure are shared, that community issues are discussed and feedback provided. Animators attend all village meetings held in their communities and are key participants, relied on by village chairs and community members alike.

In Uganda, legal requirements are for one annual planning meeting at village level which has no direct pathway or line of accountability to district or national planning processes. So Local Council Chairs I struggle to convene consultative meetings. To work around this, we ensured LCI Chairs from intervention communities are members of the citizen follow up committees. With this direct experience of the intervention and their position in governments, these LCI Chairs are able to work with the change agents to present community priorities in 122 public sector meetings at the sub county and district level. Despite the challenges and lack of obligation, 233 mandatory village level meetings were held by village leaders. During these meetings, leaders received and provided feedback on the community priorities but also presented budget and expenditure reports.

Overall 42% of the service delivery problems in the community actions plans have been solved in Tanzania compared to 33% in Uganda. At the same time, 27% and 29% were partially solved in the two countries respectively. In Tanzania 31% of identified issues are still pending while in Uganda 38% are.

In Mbogwe, where the animation intervention has been running the longest, there are clear signs of normative shifts in how citizens engage with local development. Although we cannot attribute this entirely to the intervention, Maswa, a district with similar population characteristics, is different. Citizens in Mbgwe also interact more with local leaders and participate more in meetings.

Citizens preferred means to contribute to local development



Local and national government agencies operate in ways that take account of citizen concerns, voices and civic action, and are able and driven to act in response. These practices are slowly taking root and diffusing beyond the immediate community and into national discourse as Twaweza is working to amplify these stories, voices and ideas into public and policy debates and to persuade authorities to be responsive through advocacy and litigation.

In the past, we used to solely rely on decisions made in leaders' meetings alone. Whether it was about building a classroom or any other development project, I would sit down with my co-leaders, plan things out, and then present it to the citizens with the directive that this is what the government has planned to do, and here's the financial contribution we suggest each villager should make. We rarely involved the community. However, these change agents have made a significant difference. Now, as the Village Chairperson, I no longer make unilateral decisions about what we should do. I first go to the people, gather their ideas and hear what they need. Then, I consult them in a meeting about how we can proceed. If it involves contributions, they tell us how much they are willing to contribute. If it requires labour, they volunteer their workforce. I no longer need to use force to drive development in our village"

– Uranga Patrick Mboje, Chairperson of Zabazaba Village, Maswa District, Tanzania

There are only two villages with change agents in my sub-county, that means there are 25 other villages without change agents. I would request it for you [Twaweza East Africa] to get me more change agents in the remaining villages. [This is because] of the rapid development which I am seeing in these two villages [with change agents]. The way the people in those villages behave, they are more sensitised. They participate in each and everything. If you call them in the meeting, they come. I know automatically that's because of the change agents.

– Kiemba Mukoka, Chairperson of LC3 Nabweyo Sub-County, Namutumba District, Uganda

We have examples of leaders in all of our intervention communities who express similar supportive sentiments about our community interventions. Given that we are working in over 50 communities each in Tanzania and Uganda, there is strong evidence to demonstrate that our participatory action research or animation intervention is supporting improved local government responsiveness.

With at least 150 pieces of media coverage on our animation intervention in Tanzania and over 100 in Uganda, we helped to elevate citizen agency into national public discourse.

In Kenya, over the strategy period, we have partnered with four government institutions to collect data to inform their decisions and in Uganda we have partnered with over ten. In Tanzania we have engaged numerous officials around Sauti za Wananchi data but have not successfully established partnerships with them.

As a result of these engagements, and other collaborations with civil society peers, we have generated a number of policy and practice effects. Over this strategic period, the most effective partnerships were with the ministries of health in Kenya and Uganda where we supported the response effort by collecting data in partnership with these ministries to improve evidence-based messaging and public compliance particularly around Covid-19.

We also contributed to the removal of mobile money levies in Tanzania, influenced reporting indicators in the water and sanitation sector in Uganda, supported evidence-based public education on tax issues, prompted the responsible ministry to commit to amending the access to information law in Uganda, shaped policies and plans in Makueni in Kenya, co-created the Kenya Bureau of Statistics' guidelines on incorporating independent data into their reporting on Sustainable

Development Goals, and generated hundreds of pieces of media coverage in all three countries. All of these successes reinforce the vital importance of independent data on key national issues especially from the perspective of citizens.

Civic space is less restricted in regard to basic respect for free expression, association and assembly; access to information; and established rule of law, as Twaweza, directly and in concert with diverse coalitions, amplifies citizen perspectives, stories and challenges through media and directly to government officials, mobilises citizens and civil society to undertake joint actions, and engages in selective defensive litigation against government violations of rights.

We impacted 11 proposed laws or amendments to laws including the Political Parties Act, the Media Services Act, the Statistics Act, the Online Content Regulations and key aspects of the criminal justice system. In all of these we worked in coalition with key partners and navigated the government's intransigence on these issues.

We carefully selected key sectors of civil society to work with, especially those that are often excluded or considered secondary to NGO advocacy, including political parties, artists and religious leaders. An important illustrative story of the value of this work comes with the lifting of Tanzania's ban on political party rallies in 2022. Although Twaweza engaged in no direct advocacy on this issue, beyond collecting and publicly releasing data on the same in 2018, our organisational strengthening support for the Tanzania Centre for Democracy, the only independent non-partisan forum for political parties, enabled them to push this agenda through.

In 2020, given our challenges in directly engaging the government, we introduced a new strand of work in this mission around supporting key strategic partners, from across the spectrum of civil society, to strengthen their organisations and approaches. The idea is that a stronger cohort of civil society could provide solidarity, dilute risk and make approaches and gains to government in their sectors while Twaweza was unable to do so. Over this period, we supported Equality for Growth, The Chanzo, the Creative Industry Network Tanzania, the Tanzania Centre for Democracy, the Tanzania Editors Forum and Uganda Radio Network. Each of these organisations is stronger for having engaged with Twaweza and they have been able to achieve significant policy, regulatory or practice changes in their sectors.

We have continued to play a supportive role to the media sector more broadly through capacity sessions, connections to sources, advocacy support among others. Despite the lack of new content in the form of data, we continue to be viewed as an allied partner for media.

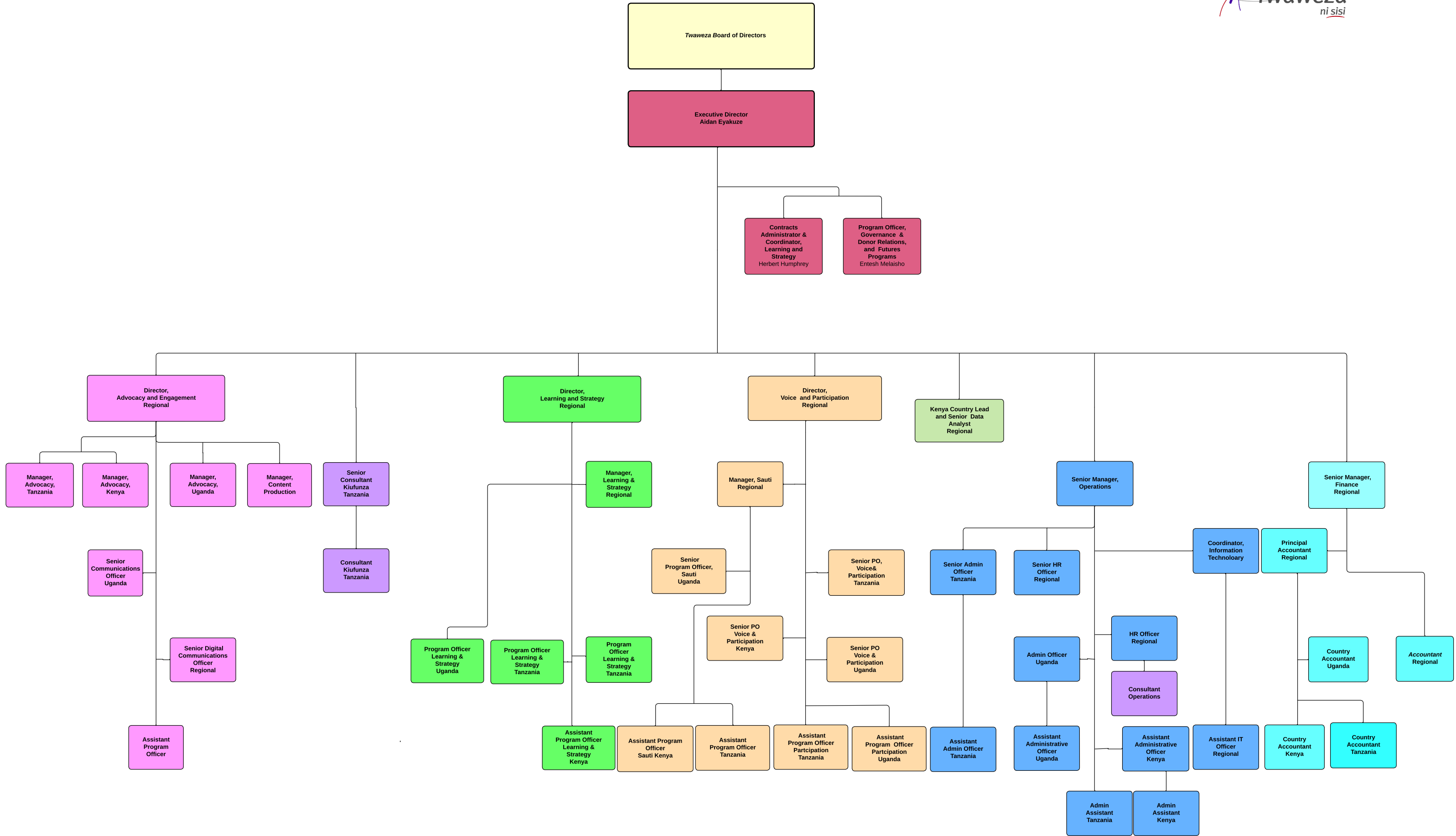
We have also expanded and extended our role in civil society advocacy more broadly. An important contribution came from our rapid study of the direct financial contribution of 16 major national NGOs to the Tanzanian economy in response to government officials' dismissive remarks about the value of the sector. In the last two years the government themselves, via the Ministry of Community Development, Gender, Women and Special Groups, annually report on the value of this contribution for all the NGOs for which they have data.

Our strategic litigation strand of work was much less successful. We ended up focusing too much on laws that affect our space to operate but have little direct influence on citizens' lives. Ultimately we dropped this strand of work when laws were changed to prohibit any public interest litigation in Tanzania and when it became clear that the government was increasingly unwilling to engage with organisations who were taking them to court.

Although this mission area was designed for Tanzania alone, as we implemented work in Uganda, an

opportunity emerged around access to information. Community change agents and partners were reporting this as a challenge, which our own data validated. The ministry responsible for these issues at national level were very open to our feedback so we expanded work in this area to include training, legislative advocacy and a guide for civil servants to use the law. Although the law has not yet been amended since the process is ongoing, we raised awareness of the challenges at ministry level and increased knowledge about the law and how to actualise it at local level.

TWAVEZA STAFF STRUCTURE
2024 - 2027



ADVOCACY AND ENGAGEMENT

KIUFUNZA

LEARNING, & STRATEGY

VOICE AND PARTICIPATION

OPERATIONS

FINANCE